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RAJARSHI SHAHU CHHATRAPATI

A SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY KING

Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar

Translation
Arun Sadhu

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RAJARSHI SHAHU CHHATRAPATI

A Social Revolutionary King

Dr. Jaysing

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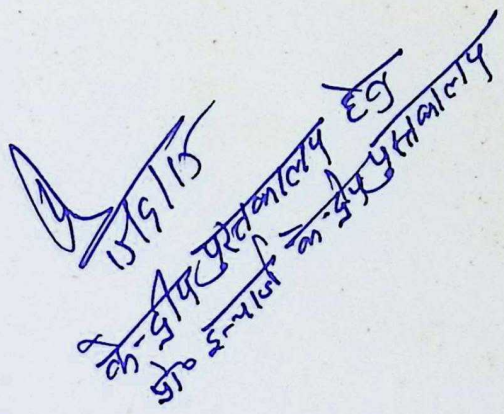

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Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati-
A Social Revolutionary King

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To,
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Dedicated to the memory of
the pillars of social democracy in India

Mahatma Jotirao Phule

Shri Narayan Guru

Periyar E.V.Ramaswami Nicker

Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad

Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil

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Foundation of Swarajya

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja followed the principles of the Satyashodhak Samaj to put an end to the practice of untouchability. In this has he truly laid the foundation of Swarajya.

-Mahatma Gandhi

The Pillar of Social Democracy

"My Dear Maharajasaheb,

.....We need you ever so much for you are the pillar of that great movement towards social democracy which is making headway in India...

- B.R.Ambedkar"
(Dr. Ambedkar's letter to Rajarshi Shahu)

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Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati : A Vignette

■ History of India records thousands of kings, but only a few such as Ashoka, Harshvardhan, Akbar, Rana Pratap and Shivaji were truly great. Another name of such a king needs to be added to this galaxy – Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. Shahu was the descendent of Shivaji the Great. He inherited not only Shivaji's throne but also the latter's ideals, and commitment to welfare governance.

■ Shahu's focus of governance was the common man. He brought into practice the noble concept of the ideal king – the king as a selfless ascetic ruler. He used his power and spent all his treasure for the welfare of the people, particularly the downtrodden and the backward. Like Shivaji, he was acknowledged all over as the 'People's King' or the 'king of Rayats' (farmers).

■ He was a king who dedicated his life to fight the scourge of caste and untouchability, who denied himself the pleasures of the palace to embrace the untouchables, the nomads and the downtrodden and to share meals with them – a radical gesture unheard of in a caste-ridden, pollution fearing society. He freed them from slavery and bestowed on them the right to equality by enforcing laws of social equality. Verily, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar honoured Shahu as the 'Friend of Untouchables' and a 'Pillar of Social Democracy' in India'.

■ Like the Emperor Ashoka who spread the message of Buddha's *Dhamma*, Rajarshi Shahu, promoted Mahatma Jotiba Phule's *Satyadhrma* and brought into reality the concepts of social Equality, Liberty and Fraternity in his kingdom. He was the messiah of the downtrodden. Overwhelmed by his revolutionary social work, the Kurmi Kshatriya Society (Farming community) of North India honoured him with the title of 'Rajarshi'. He happens to be the only king bestowed with such a title by the people of India.

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Introduction

- Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar

Chhatrapati Shivaji established in the hilly terrain of Maharashtra *Hindavi Swarajya* or people's self-rule with the help of the brave people of Maval region. Existence of the mountain forts of Maharashtra facilitated this venture. Hindavi Swarajya does not mean the rule of the Hindus. The term Hindavi referred to the people of the Indian sub-continent. Shivaji's Swarajya was the rule of the people of all hues, Hindus and Muslims; and Hindus included Brahmins, Marathas, Prabhus, Shenvis, Ramoshis, Kolis, Bhandaris, Dhangars, Mahars and all other castes - sons of the soil. Shivaji lit a spark by infusing in them love and passion for freedom. He inculcated among them the determination to sacrifice life for freedom. This inspired in far away Bundelkhand the King Chhatrasal of Bundela to fight the Mughals for the freedom of his people.

Fifty years after Shivaji, inheritors of his Swarajya crossed the river Narmada to storm Delhi and establish their control over the Mughal Emperor's throne. Later, when Ahmedshah Abdali invaded India, thousands of the Marathas laid their life to fight him on the battleground of Panipat. They fought not for their own security, but to repel aggression on their country by an alien.It was the spirit of freedom taught by Shivaji that sent them to the battlefield of far away Panipat in the North. It was the same spirit that made them fight for freedom from the British imperialists. Shivaji, thus, was an icon for armed revolutionaries of freedom in India.

The reference to the iconic King is made here because the protagonist of this book, Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati, had been the descendent to the throne of Shivaji. Soon after Shivaji's demise, his heirs split the *gadi* into two, Satara and Kolhapur. The one at Kolhapur was established by his second daughter-in-law Maharani Tarabai. Shahu inherited this *gadi* in 1884 and was coronated in 1894. He died in 1922. The twenty-eight years of his rule mark a revolutionary era in Maharashtra's social history.

Times have changed since Shivaji's *Hindavi Swarajya*. The British had

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established their rule almost all over the sub-continent. The last unsuccessful uprising against their rule was in 1857. They re-asserted their power and in the process became wiser. They realized that the local rulers had a great influence on the people and that it was unwise to oust the latter or make them completely powerless. The British adopted a more diplomatic stance to establish their hegemony by weakening substantially the military strength of the native princes. The latter also realized the power of the British and understood that it was safer to accept a secondary role. There were 600 principalities in India and all of them had made with the British separate agreements that had a common denominator which accepted the sovereignty of the British Empire in the land. In the bargain, they retained the right to govern their own states, albeit within severe limits set by the Empire. The British never lost an opportunity to demonstrate their sovereign power by punishing or removing an 'erring' ruler.

Thus by late 19th century, the Indian Empire of Britain was politically divided in two segments – the British India conquered and governed directly by the British and the 'Indian India' of the vassal rulers completely dependent on the British for survival. From Baluchistan to Assam and from Kashmir to Kanyakumari the British Union Jack proclaimed its sovereignty. Britain was the most powerful nation in the world and its empire was so spread out on the globe that the Sun never set on it.

In these circumstances, the British only expected from the Indian rulers that they remain loyal to the Crown and keep their states peaceful by maintaining law and order. The British also insisted that the rulers did not exploit their people or foster injustice. Welfare-oriented governance was expected. But all said and done, the British were alien rulers and their concern for the people was circumscribed by their fear that substantial reforms and advancement of the people would create political awareness that might pose a threat to the stability of the Empire. In British India, they had seen this happening. A small minority of educated class had begun a movement to demand more political rights. And so it was enough for the Princes to ensure that they kept their control over people so as to stall any rebellion. Having ensured this, they were free to wallow in palatial luxuries and enjoy pleasures of a princely life.

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Most of Princes followed this pattern living lavishly, throwing money to buy every pleasure that the world could offer. There were exceptions, though. The states such as Baroda, Kolhapur, Mysore, Travacore, Bikaner had competent rulers who introduced several reforms which even the British India could not match. For example, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda and Rajarshi Shahu of Kolhapur had made primary education free and compulsory in their states. British India had no such facility.

In introducing socio-economic reforms, Shahu went far ahead of his times. He was a man of long vision with a prophetic instinct. He bestowed on his people socio-economic rights that demonstrated his deep faith in the fundamental principles of human liberty, equality and fraternity. The concept of social justice, now the whipping horse of modern politicians, was not in vogue in his time. Shahu not only articulated this concept clearly but also enforced it firmly in his kingdom. One example would suffice to show how Shahu accomplished this.

Shahu had come to a conclusion that the backward classes would not take to higher education and that their living conditions would not improve, unless they were given a place in the governing bureaucracy. In 1902, he declared 50% reservation in government jobs for the backward classes. No other ruler in India had taken such a radical step. In other words, Shahu was a pioneer or originator of caste and class-based reservation policy in India. The system of reservation which Dr. Ambedkar later incorporated in the Indian Constitution thus has its roots in Shahu's 1902 declaration. Several such moves introduced by Shahu to promote social justice cannot be delineated here owing to space constraint. It, however, ought to be noted that Shahu did not merely talk of equality and social justice; he acted on it. He was the harbinger of the modern era of social justice in India when the country suffered under the British yoke and the Indian Princes indulged in traditional pleasures.

It is now universally acknowledged that among the systems of governance, democracy is superior to any other system including monarchy. In the latter, the King is at the focus and democracy has people as the focus of governance. Most of us are democrats and yet we admire Emperor Ashoka, Chhatrapati Shivaji or Rajarshi Shahu. That is because these kings ruled with people as a focus of their administration. They used their power and wealth

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for welfare of the people. Shahu was called 'people's king' simply because he spent his life, employed his power and used his state's treasury for people's welfare, to enhance their living conditions and to try to bestow upon them social and economic justice.

On gaining independance, we established a Republic and introduced parliamentary democracy. Our democracy gives us political rights. But it will be an incomplete democracy till it delivers us social equality and justice. Three great souls from Maharashtra, Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu and Dr. Ambedkar fought for the ideal of social democracy. They fought for putting to an end all kinds of discrimination between man and man and create equal opportunities of development for all. They had to fight for this not with British rulers but their own people. The Indian educated elite that demanded political freedom denied its own brethren social equality and freedom. Phule-Shahu-Ambedkar in Maharashtra and elsewhere in India Periyar Ramaswami, Shri Narayan Guru had launched movements to establish social democracy. Dr. Ambedkar wrote a letter to Shahu honouring the latter for his yeomen social contribution in which he said, "You are a pillar of social democracy in India".

Great men do what they preach. Shahu did not stop at condemning the practice of untouchability as a blot on humanity. He issued three orders in succession banning practice of untouchability at public places like schools and hospitals. He employed untouchables as his personal guards, personal servants, mahouts, drivers and companions in hunting game. They were given posts in police force. Shahu made some young men among them to learn law and made them lawyers. He publicly shared meals with untouchables cooked by untouchables. Shahu helped Gangaram Kamble, a Mahar by caste, set up a hotel in Kolhapr and made it a practice to visit there regularly for tea. On occasions, he took along with him members of high caste aristocratic families to Gangaram's hotel for tea. None would dare refuse the King's wish. This is how Shahu used his royal powers to favour the downtrodden. When Shahu went to Nagpur to attend a conference of the untouchables, orthodox Hindu groups displayed posters all over the city abusing him as 'King of Dheds' (Mahars). Dalits of Nagpur were furious but Shahu calmed them saying at the conference that he considered the description his honour. When Shahu died, Dr. Ambedkar grieved, "Untouchables never had a friend like Shahu and I doubt if there ever will be another friend like him."

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Untouchability was the ugliest manifestation of caste discrimination. Institution of caste is considered to be the defining characteristics of Hindu religion and society. Shahu felt that so long as the caste system existed social equality and justice could not be established. He fought the system fiercely till the end. Spread of education, social awareness, reservation in government jobs were some of his weapons in his fight. The most powerful instrument he employed was sponsoring inter-caste marriages. It was a radical step in a society where each caste looked at the lower castes with utter disdain. He arranged his sister's marriage in the princely family of Holkars of Indore. This was a step ahead in time. Holkars came from Dhangar caste.

It is imperative that the so-called high caste people in the society should change their psyche and shed their social prejudices in the 21st century. The only caste in society is human caste. Castes are invented and imposed by man and this discrimination is unnatural. This was how Shahu looked at this issue. We shall strengthen the unity of our country when we adapt Shahu's view. That will make the country stronger.

Rajarshi Shahu followed the path shown by Mahatma Phule by aligning with backward classes, the 'lowliest of the untouchables', small farmers, nomadic tribes, women and such other neglected groups whom the society had denied education, knowledge, wealth and dignity. To ameliorate the women, Shahu legalized widow re-marriages, facilitated inter-caste marriages, brought legislation legalizing divorce, improved succession laws to favour women and made progressive laws to prevent inhuman practices such as *Devdasi*. Far more significant was the legislation he made in 1919 for prevention of harassment of and cruel treatment to women by her family. Nowhere in India, in no princely state nor in the British India, such a legislation was thought of in those days. Perhaps, no one felt its need. Shahu was a man of masses and he knew the situation on the ground first hand.. His heart bled for women who faced untold horrors at home. He made the state's power and law stand behind such unfortunate women. Even after independence, it took free India nearly sixty years to make a similar legislation 'Domestic Violence Act' which came into force in 2006. Few know that Shahu had made such a law 85 years ago. It is a matter of pride for us Indians that we had a King who thought of this progressive legislation long long ago.

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It is not enough to merely remember that King fondly. Even today untold number of helpless women are humiliated and victimized by their families in our country. Many seek release in suicide and many others are burnt to death. This is a blot on our society. Indian Parliament has made a law to prevent these atrocities and provide protection to women in such cases. Now it is the moral duty of social workers and women's organizations to create awareness of this legal provision among women. Then alone can be said that our society has accepted the accountability in this regard as laid down by Shahu.

Shahu made many other progressive strides during his reign. These include chiefly declaration of public irrigation policy, building of country's largest irrigation dam of that time at Radhanagari, innovative experiments in agriculture, encouragements to local enterprise and trade to break Mumbai traders' monopoly, introduction of free compulsory primary education, encouragement and royal patronage to arts and sports such as music, theatre, painting, sculpture, wrestling, *sathmari* and hunting and promoting Hindu-Muslim friendship. Although all these areas cannot be dealt at this juncture, we take note here of a couple of issues, in the context of present times.

Mahatma Phule and Shahu considered education as a key to progress. Phule, in his submission before the Hunter Commission in 1862 demanded free and compulsory primary education to children below the age of 12. Later in 1917, Rajarshi Shahu made a legislation to this effect and enforced it. It takes more than 60 years for our Parliament to enact legislation empowering the Indian children the right to the primary education. Recently, the UPA Government at Centre has passed the law to that effect. Effective implementation of this measure would be a more meaningful tribute to Shahu.

Another point is Hindu-Muslim unity. Immediately on ascending the Kolhapur *gadi* in 1894, a year after the first Hindu-Muslim riots in Mumbai, Shahu was felicitated at a function in his honour in Pune where he spoke of Hindu-Muslim unity. In his reign he took many steps in this direction including translation of Holy Kuran in Marathi and setting up hostel for Muslim students. In several meetings and conferences, he explained his nationalistic views saying that Hindus, Muslims, Jains and others were but parts of the same Indian nation with equal rights. On one occasion he says, "We are all Indians; we are brothers. Be they of any caste, race or religion, they are first Indians. For an individual, his religion may be important, but

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this would not come in the way of his nationhood. In this context, I consider religion has lesser importance. We can briefly define religion as a way to approach God. For example, there are many roads from different directions that take one to Mumbai. People chose the shortest and the easiest route. Religions that emerged in different countries in different circumstances similarly take people to God by various routes. If that was so, why should there be mutual hatred between peoples of different religions?"

These are thoughts that build and endure a nation. "Love begets love and hatred fosters more hatred"; such was the humanitarian message that Shahu spread through his speeches and actions. We know that the biggest threat to India and the world today is from terrorism stemming from blind religious fundamentalism. Shahu's thoughts can still guide the Indian people when our society is wracked with hatred fostered by identities of caste, race, religion and region.

Thus we find that Chhatrapati Shahu's ideals and thoughts on social revolution and patriotism have stood the test of time. In his time, his thoughts were ridiculed and ignored by higher classes. Elite class and thinkers forgot their moral equilibrium when they accused Shahu of being a traitor to Swarajya on account of his revolutionary ideals of social justice and equality. Great patriots of the time who led the movement for political freedom did not consider social reforms as a liberating force. It was because of this mindset that a simple resolution condemning practice of untouchability could not be passed for many years at the forum of Indian National Congress. It was unfortunate that those who gave priority to political freedom waited till the Independence day to break the shackles of slavery of their own brethren.

It is not surprising therefore that Shahu's ideals were ignored in his time. The tragedy is, 65 years after independence, those ideals and measures as espoused by Shahu are still not properly implemented as they should be. Clearly his thoughts are still relevant today as they were a century ago. The battle is still on and looking at the conditions of rural women, the landless, small agriculturists, workers and Dalits, one can see that the war would go on for a long time. Shahu's thoughts would continue to inspire and guide us Indians till we eventually win this war.

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We have given above a brief overview of the achievements and ideals of our protagonist, Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati. It will be in the fitness of things here to narrate briefly the history behind production of this book.

No book is produced by an accident. Quite a lot of thinking, efforts, planning and creative urges of writer and publisher work for a long time before a book comes out. Harder the efforts and urges are, sweeter the manifestation seems. It is up to the readers to judge how fruitful our efforts have been.

A few history lovers of Kolhapur, itself a historic city with ancient origin, established in 1992 an institution dedicated to historical research and named it **Maharashtra Itihas Prabodhini**. The present Maharaja of Kolhapur **Chhatrapati Shahu** (great grandson of Rajarshi Shahu) became its Chief Patron. Scholars and historians such as Pandit Setu Madhavrao Pagdi, Dr. V. B. Kolte and Tarkateertha Laxmanshastri Joshi gladly agreed to become members of its Advisory Board. Several renowned thinkers and litterateurs of Maharashtra are on its board today. Although the chief objective of the institution is research in Maharashtra's history, we have added creating social awareness among people as one of its other objectives. Thus our research is focused on the lives of great social revolutionaries like Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu and Dr. Ambedkar. This book is one of the products of our endeavours.

Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati of Kolhapur was coronated in 1894. In 1994, centenary of Shahu's Coronation was ceremoniously observed at many places in Maharashtra. Maharashtra Itihas Prabodhini decided on this occasion to create a literary memorial by publishing Rajarshi Shahu Commemoration Volume in Marathi. As the director of the institution, I was entrusted with the responsibility of executing the task.

The volume in Marathi in three parts was prepared by me after seven years of rigorous work. The first part contains an analytical biography of Chhatrapati Shahu. The second part has articles on him penned by renowned scholars, contemporaries, thinkers, writers and political leaders exploring the variegated facets of Shahu's life and his work. The third one had assorted material including Shahu's speeches, his correspondence, government orders and declarations, legislations and over 200 rare photographs.

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We must acknowledge gratefully that in the meantime in 1997, the then Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister **Ms. Mayawati** gave a generous donation of Rs. 500,000 for the project which facilitated bringing out this book most gorgeously. Ms. Mayawati has built several memorials of Shahu in U.P. including social and education institutions as wells as his statues.

This Commemoration Volume in Marathi was published on May 25, 2001 at the hands of **Hon'ble Sharad Pawar,** presently the Union Minister for Agriculture, in the premises of Shahu Chhatrapati's palace in Kolhapur in a glittering function appropriate to the occasion. Pawar expressed the desire that Shahu's biography ought to be read all over the world and for that purpose it should be translated into Hindi and English languages. He assured that the **'Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan',** which he heads, would provide financial assistance for the purpose. Publication of this book fulfils that obligation. We are really grateful to him.

We are equally grateful to his daughter, **Smt. Supriya Sule,** M.P. and herself an active social worker amongst the downtrodden and nomadic society, for her keen interest and selfless cooperation in bringing out the book, thus helping our mission of Shahu's thoughts and work and making them known to the world at large.

The title of the Marathi edition of this book is "Rajarshi Shahu Smarak Granth" (Rajarshi Shahu Commemoration Volume). For the translated edition, the title has been changed to "Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati – A Social Revolutionary King".

Rajarshi Shahu belongs to that galaxy of great men who built and shaped modern India. In order that Shahu's life, achievements and contributions be made known to the people all over India, our institution has decided to publish this volume, apart from in Hindi and English, in 13 other Indian languages such as Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannad, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malyalam, Udiya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Accordingly, the translation editions in Kannad & Konkani have already been published. The press copies of Gujarati, Sindhi and Urdu are ready for publication.

The Maharashtra Itihas Prabodhini has successfully executed the projects it had planned and undertaken so far and we have no doubt that this ambitious endeavour will also be successfully carried out. This is our mission.

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Moreover, We hope to publish the book in major foreign languages such as German and Russian, thus placing the life & work of Shahu Chhatrapati at the international level so as to reach it worldwide and acquire international recognation.

It is not easy to translate a volume like this from one language to another. The translator needs to have a command of both languages in question. Fortunately, we could have renowned Marathi writer Shri. Arun Sadhu for English translation. He accepted this mammoth task on our request and completed it with determination mainly because of the deep respect he has for our protagonist and also due to his unshakeable social commitment. He had a team of able associates to help. We are forever grateful to Shri. Arun Sadhu and his associates for their valuable cooperation and hard work.

We are thankful to our friends Prof. Kamalakar Dixit, Prin. Dilip Konnur, Prof. D. N. Pangu, Dr. Arundhati Pawar, Shri. Vijayrao Shinde for checking the typeset copy and offering valuable suggestions in preparing its final version. Shri. Shinde has done a laborous work of preparing the index.

We would also like to thank Shri. Nihal Shipurkar proprietor of Bharati Mudranalaya for his strenuous work of typesetting and Shri. Anand Limaye of India Printing works, Mumbai, for producing the book in very handsome form.

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Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati -
A Social Revolutionary King

Volume I : Biography

Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati : Life and work

By

Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar

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Prologue

The British began conquering territories in India in the 18th century and by 1857 brought more or less the entire Indian sub-continent under their direct or indirect rule. They robbed us of our freedom and imposed slavery on us. The Indians did try in 1857 to overthrow the yoke of British imperialism in an armed insurrection; but it failed owing to modern weaponry and cunning strategies of the British. The armed uprising was led by discontented Indian Princes hurt by the British and groups of Indian soldiers and their leaders of the British army. Having been defeated once, these elements did not raise their head against colonial rulers. From this juncture, the leadership of the people passed from the hands of Indians raised in medieval mindset to the English-educated generation of young men. This new generation, shaped by ideals and thoughts learnt from western education began thinking seriously about political slavery imposed on their people. There began a search among these men across the country for means of slackening the tight grip of the foreign rule if not for overthrowing it. It soon led to the freedom movement under the leadership of the Indian National Congress.

The freedom movement mostly dominated the modern era of India's history and its leaders including Pitamaha Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice M.G.Ranade, Hon'ble G.K.Gokhale, Lokmanya Tilak and then Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Netaji Subhashchandra Bose of the next generation are all consecrated as national leaders. And rightly so. There was nothing wrong in this perception. As the national freedom movement gathered momentum, popularity and esteem of these leaders grew and they were considered symbols of country's freedom, national identity and future glory.

Simultaneously, another movement was on in this country which espoused a broader meaning of freedom and human liberty. It touched almost all aspects of people's life and its foundations were not narrow. The three supreme ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, were the soul of this

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movement. It was led in Maharashtra by Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu, Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and outside Maharashtra by social reformers like Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Shri Narayan Guru in the South. However, despite having espoused the broad universal ideals which enhance the quality of human civilization, these social reformers did not receive equal esteem as the leaders fighting for political freedom did.

Ironically, some of these great social reformers during their life and even afterward became the butt of ridicule and vicious criticism as traitors of their own people and hand maidens of the British just because they opposed giving priority to political freedom. That our protagonist was the victim of this unfair canard is recorded in history. Partisans of political movements had attacked Shahu Chhatrapati calling him as 'agent of the British' and 'traitor to Swaraja movement'. Opponents even indulged in his character assassination. The social reformers, however, walked on their chosen path boldly facing opposition from their own people .

It needs no serious academic research to find out why the two groups, freedom fighters and social reformers, were continuously pitted against each other and why they displayed mutual animosity on occasions. In the days from foundation of the Indian National Congress to the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930, the national freedom movement was dominated by high castes, mostly the Brahmins. In Maharashtra, Congress leadership comprised mostly of Brahmins till 1930. This class stridently attacked the unjust alien colonial rule demanding political freedom from the forum of the Congress organization. But the same people kept silent on the issues of centuries old social injustices and slavery within the society. When questioned on this dichotomy, they pithily argued that time was not ripe for social reforms and thus shirked away from their fundamental social and national responsibilities.

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An episode in history of Indian National Congress sharply illustrates this reluctance on the part of the elite classes in this regard. Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde, non-Brahmin political and social leader, tried successively for ten years to pass a resolution from the Congress forum advocating end to the practice of untouchability. But the high-caste leadership of the Congress (meaning Brahmins and those under the influence of Brahmins) simply ignored and ensured that the resolution lapsed each year. Finally, the resolution was passed in the Kolkata Congress in 1917. That year, it should be noted, the President of the Congress was the great humanitarian theosophist, Dr. Annie Besant!

Contrast this with what Chhatrapati Shahu was doing when it was impossible to pass even a resolution to end untouchability at the Congress session? Shahu in these years had begun to pass orders and enforce legislations to root out untouchability from his principality. He publicly mingled with the lowliest of the castes and shared food and water with them. He honoured Dalit leader Dr. Ambedkar by inviting the latter for a festive dinner in his palace. He set an example of social and national unity by honoring a social worker from the cobbler caste by making him the chairman of Kolhapur Municipal Council.

Neither Shahu Chhatrapati and Dr. Ambedkar nor Periyar Ramaswami was against national freedom. They had no reason to oppose. Their argument was that just as the nationalists fought to end slavery imposed by the British, the social reformers sought to liberate the society from slavery imposed by the class to which most nationalist fighters belonged. First put an end to slavery imposed by you on us and only then think of the imperial yoke. Political freedom would benefit the high caste elites only. The backward classes cannot taste the fruits of freedom because of their poverty and ignorance. So long as they remain poor and ignorant, the higher classes alone would enjoy fruits of freedom and become stronger . Exploitation of the

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ignorant masses would only increase. Thus ran their argument.

This point is dealt with succinctly in one of his letters by Swami Vivekanand, the great commentator on Indian philosophy and religon. He says :

"India must be rejuvenated. Poor should have enough food. There should be universal spread of education. Practice of priesthood must be ended. There should be no atrocities of priests. There should be no social tyranny...."

"Some of our native young men hold meetings to win power from the British. The British laugh at them. Those who do not wish freedom for others have no right to freedom for themselves. Imagine what will happen if the British handed over power to you. Those who gain power will suppress the others. Power will not reach the poor. Some slaves hunger for power in order to enslave others." - *(Swami Vivekananda's letter from New York to Mr. Aalasingh Perumal at Madars, November 19th, 1894.)*

Rajarshi Shahu's position is no different. He says,

"Swarajya, as we understand today, would mean transfer of power in the hands of a few if the current caste system in India continues. This, I must assert, should not be interpreted as my opposition to the Swarajya movement. We do want Swarajya. But....."

"I am not at all in favour of relinquishing the British of power in order to hand over that power to the minority of educated Brahmins. What does the history from times of Lord Parshuram to the current era teach us? It is difficult to forget the historical fact of how the Brahmin bureaucracy in the South (India) has enslaved masses methodically and persistently by keeping them away from education and by monopolizing all sources of knowledge."

- (From Rajarshi Shahu's speeches, Dec. 27th, 1917)

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The above quotations of these two great men are self-evident and need no comments. The facts and sentiments are the same. The difference is that Chhatrapati Shahu who said these things was branded as a traitor to the cause of Swarajya; Swami Vivekananda fortunately escaped this stigma.

The freedom movement culminated in independence and India became free on August 15th, 1947. However, this freedom has not made the masses truly happy. Even many knowledgeable people were disillusioned. The colonial yoke was thrown away; but the people soon realized that the questions of social discrimination, social and economic exploitation of the poor stemming from ignorance, poverty, caste discrimination and untouchability had remained as they were. Freedom means solving these problems. It was this kind of freedom that Phule, Shahu, Ambedkar, Periyar and Shri Narayan Guru had demanded.

Sixty five years after independence, India is still beset with the same vexatious problems of poverty and ignorance. Millions live below poverty line; many millions of children remain illiterate. Countless ignorant women live with the medieval mindset happily. The concept of gender equality is beyond their imagination. On the one hand, we made history by having a well-educated woman as the President of India; on the other, thousands fall daily victim of family harassment and atrocities. On the one hand India's GDP grows phenomenally and several Indians figure in the lists of global billionaires; on the other in rural India thousands of farmers commit suicide owing to shortages and indebtedness. The reality cannot be wished away. Dr. A.P.J. Kalam dreams of a super-power India in 2020. Is that possible in the face of this reality? This is the most difficult question before the 21st Century India.

There is no answer to this other than establishment of social and economic

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equality in India. To achieve this, we shall have to turn to the lives and teachings of Phule, Shahu and Ambedkar. Gautam Buddha's broad humanism and all-encompassing love and piety, as also Chhatrapati Shivaji's spirit of freedom and his determination to fight boldly all injustices and atrocities, should also inspire us to wage another war for freedom. This is a war for social and economic equality, for freedom from social discrimination and injustices. In this light, we hope, the life of this social revolutionary king of Maharashtra would provide guidance and inspiration to future generations of India.

- Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar

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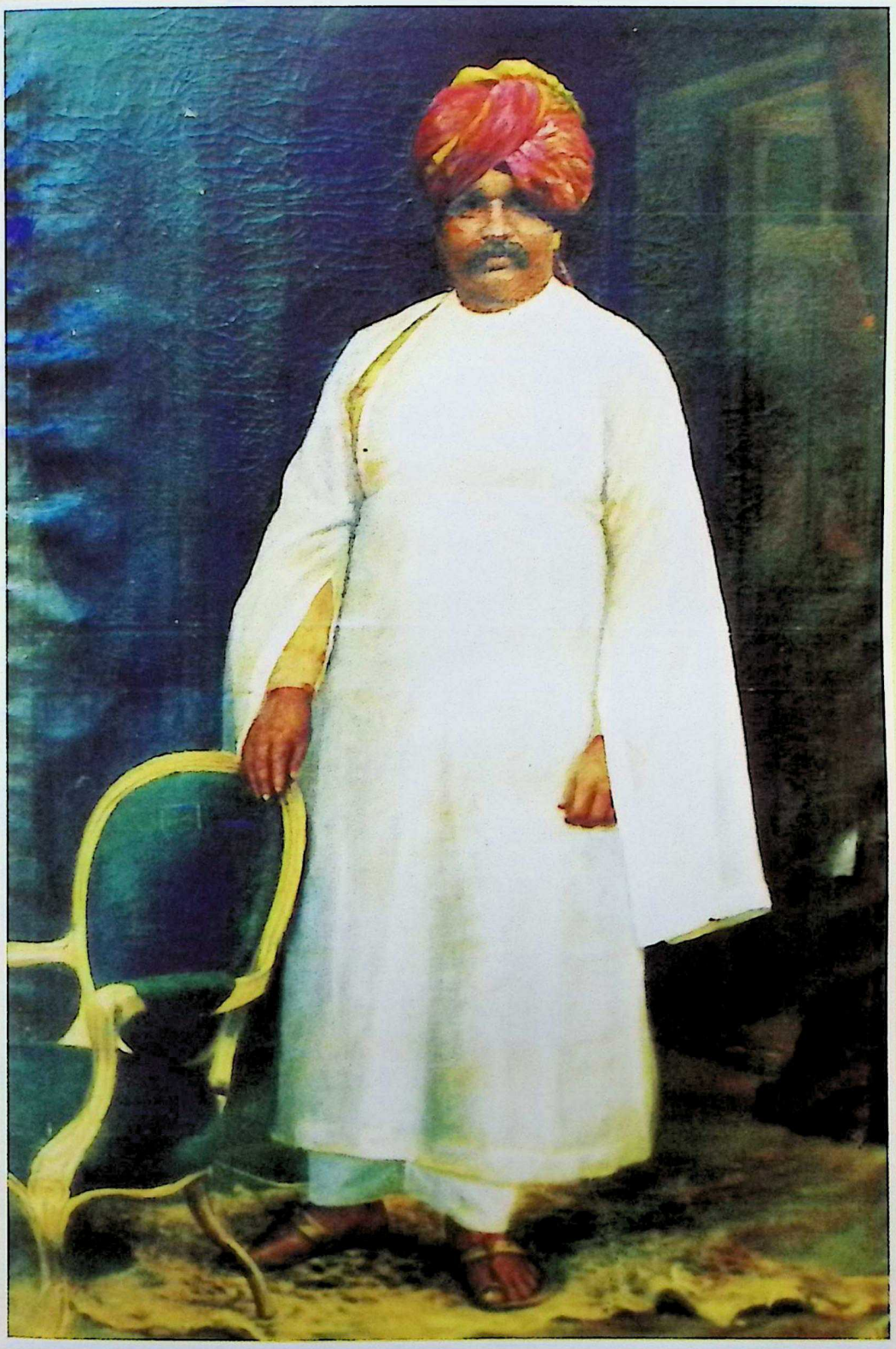

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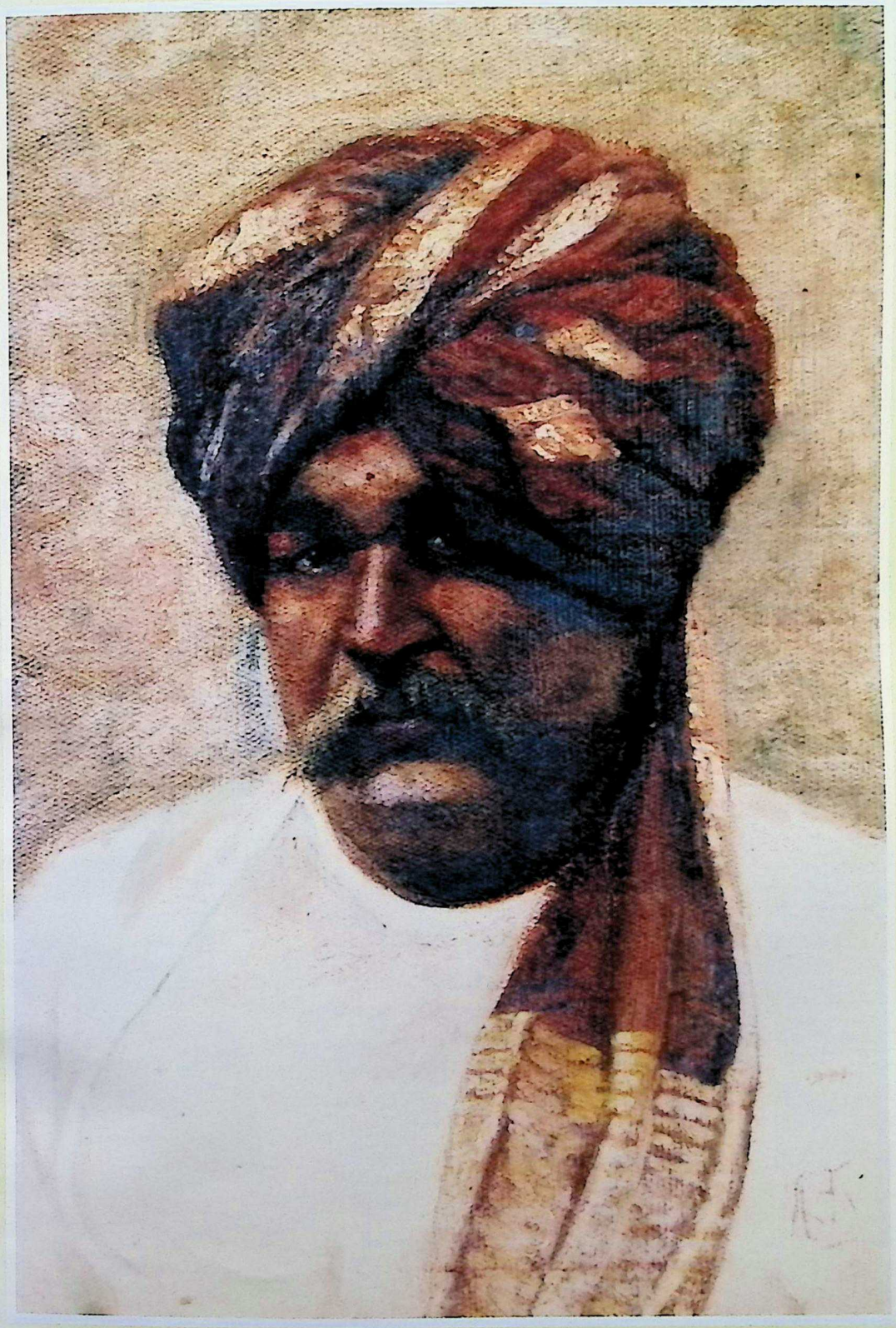

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1.

BACKGROUND

History of the world reveals that invaders invariably carry their culture, religion, faith, arts and science to the lands they march into. And when they emerge victorious, the invaders move freely on the occupied lands and establish their kingdoms. The intercourse gives rise first to cultural conflicts between the victors and the vanquished; and then to the process of co-ordination and harmonious integration. As a result, a mixed culture of an altogether different hue comes into being on the land invaded. This ceaseless process of cultural amalgamation goes on in many parts of the world at all times.

That also is the story of India in the past thousand years. During this period, first came the Muslim invaders. Acquisition of political power as also of wealth by means of plunder and loot were certainly their objectives as important as propagation of Islam. The baggage mentioned above accompanied their invasion too and started working once the Islamic rule stabilized here. The process of cultural conflict and co-ordination between Islam and Hinduism began. The co-ordination yielded wide-ranging results: from creation of the Taj Mahal to the rise of the *Bhakti* sect; from the use of cannon to pushing the Indian women behind purdah.

BRITISH RULE BEFORE SHAHU

It were the Europeans, who invaded this country in a big way after the Muslims. And it were the British who won the race for grabbing the political power in India, though they arrived much later than their European rivals like the Portuguese, French and the Dutch. In 1757, the victory in the battle of Plassey installed the British rule in India. But merely within a century's time, the British made the Indian Princes bite dust, or turned them into puppets; and brought the whole canvass ranging from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Baluchistan to Assam, under their thumb. The last attempt of the Indians to topple the British rule was frustrated in 1857. The British rulers used coercion and terror in ample measure. Since then, this country lay low as meek as a lamb.

Muslim invaders came with sword in one hand and the Quran in the other. British invaders came in the garb of traders; one hand holding scales and the other ready to brandish sword. They wielded sword to guard the scales only when the situation demanded. They did bring in the Bible with them but kept it low in the baggage. They

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took it out occasionally, when the scales and the sword had done their job. The British trader certainly loved the Bible, but he never allowed that to come in the way of the scales. No wonder the British are considered the shrewdest and the wisest of all in the history of the imperialists.

Religion and politics were the fundamental motivating forces of the Muslim rulers. The 'Economic' thought was almost absent in them. Their greedy plunders and extortion of revenue from subjects to fill up the treasury cannot be termed as the 'Economic thought'. The deeper "Economic' motivation of the European imperialists was simply missing in them. This was the crucial difference between the Muslim and British rulers. Trading remained the economic motivational force of the British. Looting of the subjects comprised their economic policy. Yet their loot did not stem from felonious arson and bloodshed. The subjects were looted in such a way that they hardly realized how and when they were robbed off. This technique of looting the British perfected is called the 'Modern Commercial Imperialism'.

The plunders carried out by the Muslim invaders cannot be compared with this modern technique of looting. It was the grand old man Dadabhai Nowrojee, who was the first ever Indian to realise this horrifying dimensions of the modern technique. In 1871, he said about the British : "the annual loss of wealth, which was 3 million Pounds at the beginning of this century, has risen to the tune of 30 million Pounds. Historians say, Mohammed Gazni invaded India 18 times and looted it as many times. But the total wealth he plundered in all his forays was far too insignificant compared to what you (British) loot in just one single year. Besides, the wound that Gazani inflicted upon India healed after his 18th campaign. But when you strike, it causes ceaseless bleeding. Like the relentless march of the seasons, your loot of 30 million Pounds that we produce must be taken away from this country, irrespective of our survival or death."

"Your empire is erected on the foundation of the wealth and blood of the Indian people. India is totally exhausted and has been bleeding owing to the exorbitant war expenditure and your policy of carrying away India's wealth every year. It isn't surprising that the bleeding has put India on the death-bed."[1]

Dadabhai's statement exposes the true nature as also the ultimate goal of the British, under whose control first the rest of India and then Maharashtra fell. The British were the leader of the new age, which had dawned on Europe in the 16th century. This age was founded on revolutionary thinking in various fields concerning human life like religion, philosophy, literature, arts and science. The Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century and the French Revolution were the first few glimpses of the new era. England took the lead by virtue of its competence and capacity. England had a definite edge over other European countries in trade, navy, army, science and technology. There was one more thing that made England stand out. That was England's democratic governance. England was the "mother of democracy". It were the British who first pioneered the values of peoples' sovereignty and individual freedom. The British, who brought the whole India in the 19th century under their rule, therefore, were no ordinary invaders. They were the most advanced human beings of the time

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on this planet. And India which lagged far behind in the fields of knowledge and science, happened to encounter with these very 'super-humans'.

19TH CENTURY BEFORE SHAHU

The 19th century has been outstanding period of the past millennium in the history of India. It was in this century that the Great Britain, the most powerful of the western countries, set up its empire here. It was also for the first time in the history that the Indian sub-continent came under a single political rule. Emperor Aurangzeb did claim in the 17th century that he had conquered the whole of India. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he could never conquer the South of the sub-continent. He could not subdue the Marathas in Maharashtra and the Nayaks in Karnataka. The British, however did succeed in establishing their unquestionable rule from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean on a sound and strong foundation so robust that even the insurgency of 1857 could not uproot it. The empire grew stronger and stronger.

The British were different from the Indians not just in respect of religion and culture. They had far different concepts of social, governmental and military organizational structures, the nation and democracy, science and scientific temperament. The native Indians could not match them in any of these respects. With the establishment of the British rule, India came under governance of a modern, Western nation, which was a world military power and had an unflinching loyalty to science and technology. Never before in history was India under such a ruler.

The British rule brought peace to this country. That was a completely new experience for the Indians who had hardly ever seen peace and stability of the kind offered by the British, certainly not in the 18th century. The internal conflicts and clashes amongst the native Indian rulers had thrown the sub-continent in a turmoil. The Marathas were one such native ruler. The meaning of peace brought by the British rule cannot be grasped better unless one looked at the anarchy caused in each other's territory by warlords such as the two Maratha houses of the Shindes and the Holkars. The British bludgeoned all the native rulers into submission and made them helpless. Then they wiped out the menace of the ferocious marauders like the *Pendharis* and the *Thugs*, who had caused havoc across the country. These measures brought peace all over. But the native Indian had to pay a heavy price for this peace- their freedom. Good governance accompanied peace in the British rule. It was ushered in by a new administrative set up, new codes of laws and a new judicial system that held all persons equal before the law of the land. Never before in the past India had witnessed such a refreshing system.

Around the same time, the British laid the foundation of Western education in the regions under them. The striking feature of this education was that it was free from monopoly. It was open to all the sections of the society. Besides the English language, this educational system introduced the Indian people to Western philosophy, history, arts and sciences. For the first time, the native Indians started knowing about the world outside India, its vastness and the mind-boggling strides taken in the fields of science and technology, by the Europeans.

Western education brought with it the

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art of printing and newspapers. Missionaries were on the forefront of this. First came the English newspapers. Then followed the journals in local languages. The educated natives quickly realised that newspapers were a very effective tool of social enlightenment.

The British started making sweeping infra-structural changes. The new highways, bridges, post, telegraph and the railways linked important cities and ports in the country. Particularly, the railways gave a fillip to the process of integration of the country's different regions. It helped in a big way the emergence of the concept of One Nation. The modern means of communication introduced the people to science and technology of the new age. The realisation that science was the religion of the new age followed.

Railways and telegraph brought in the industries of the new era. Jute and textile mills were set up in Kolkata and Mumbai. These cities burgeoned into the new industrial centers of the sub-continent. The industrial worker of India, like the one in Europe, was born.

The encounter with the new ideas and technology simultaneously triggered a great social and cultural stirring in the Indian society. The class of people awakened by the western education began discovery of the self. Western education had lent him a new vision and it confronted the hard questions the society had to confront. How could the British defeat us? What are those qualities the British possessed and we lacked that enabled the former to establish their supremacy? And what are our shortcomings that made us helpless? Why is the British culture full of new features; and why the same is missing in our culture? Are the deficiencies and faults of Hindu religion, as pointed out by the Christian missionaries, factual and are they really dragging the feet of the society? If true, what measures need be taken to rectify. Answers to these questions would not come without deep thinking and soul-searching.

Some fiercely nationalist and humanist educated Indians set out to find answers. That gave birth to many movements aimed at religious and social reforms. The Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Satyashodhak Samaj and a few other organisations were progenies of some such movements. They made a sincere effort to search the long-lost soul of India. Theirs was an endeavour to arouse the self-respect of the Indian society. They worked hard with all their strength towards that end.

Yet another concept emerged simultaneously - the concept of Indian nationalism. The centralized British rule and the soul-searching stimulated by Western education had sown the seeds. The growing self-realisation that all inhabitants of the sub-continent were but a part of one Indian nation and that their welfare lay in coming together formed, later on, the basis of the national freedom movement.

These were unprecedented developments, positive and conducive for making of the new society and creation of the new nation. These developments certainly made the 19th century carve its niche in the history of India.

MAHARASHTRA BEFORE SHAHU

The authority of the Marathas, who once controlled levers of power in Delhi and held sway beyond Atock in the North, diminished after the decline of the Peshwas. The administration of the reckless Peshwa Bajirao II, devoid of vision and prudence,

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and the bickering and discord between the knights Shinde, Holkar, Bhosale and Gaekwad , caused the downfall of the Peshwas. Each one of them had become oblivious of the aims and objectives of the founding father of the *Swaraj* – Shivaji the Great. As the Peshwa power began declining, the Shindes busied themselves in looting the areas under the Holkars and the Holkars did the same to the Shindes. The situation in the capital city of Pune was worse. Those who were considered the pillars of the Maratha domain-the Shindes and Holkars- themselves had caused chaos in Pune. The Peshwa was trapped by the scheming British and was helplessly plotting to come out of it with awkward motions. Against this backdrop, no wonder, the Maratha people heaved a collective sigh of relief when the Union jack was hoisted atop the *Shaniwarwada*, the palace from where the Peshwas ruled. The end of the Brahminical rule of Bajirao Peshwa immensely saddened only the Brahmins, who parasitically lived on alms and feasts from the palace. The barons and landlords were already tormented by the coercive rule of Bajirao. They had reason to readily accept the British rule as it granted them their rights and privileges. None else than the Governor Elphinston himself organized meetings with the afflicted Brahmin class at Pune and Wai and sought to pacify them with a promise that they would not be deprived of their traditional religious feasts. The social supremacy of the Brahmins remained intact.

Nevertheless, the British were wise enough to anticipate that the political void caused by the abdication of the Peshwa, despite his anarchic rule, would lead to political resentment among the Maratha people. They decided to revive the rule of the Chhatrapati at Satara and declared that the Chhatrapati was the rightful ruler of the region and that the Peshwas had fraudulently usurped his powers. The British were only reinstating the Chhatrapati and thereby returning the power to the rightful owner, they announced. Thus the British carved out a small Maratha domain of Satara and installed Chhatrapati Pratapsingh, as their nominee on the throne. The idea was to mollify the sentiments of the Marathas and demonstrate how kind and fair were the new rulers. They had brought back the rule of the Chhatrapati, till then reduced to non-entity. The British, however, did take care to make it quite clear that reinstatement of the Maratha king on the Satara throne certainly did not mean the revival of Shivaji's self-rule or *swaraj*.[2] It was a clever tactical move. Later, in 1839, they hatched a lot many conspiracies against Pratapsingh and overthrew him. A decade later, in 1848, they applied the 'Doctrine of Lapse' for succession and deposed the Satara kingdom as a whole.

Satara and Kolhapur (Karveer) are the two branches of the Bhosale clan. After Satara was annexed, only the Kolhapur throne of the Chhatrapati remained. The Peshwas had chosen to ignore the Chhatrapati. But not the Maratha masses. The entire lot of the Marathi-speaking people looked up to the Kolhapur throne with a great reverence as the one that belonged to the descendents of Shivaji. Later, this adoration grew enormously when the process of political awakening began in Maharashtra and with research of Maratha history becoming an important tool of this awakening.

Apart from Kolhapur, there were many other Princely States in the South, prominent among these were Bhor,

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Aundh, Sangli, Kurundwad, Mudhol and Jamkhandi. In addition to these States, there were Jagirdars of many places. The Princes as well as the Jagirdars were totally under the control of the British. They administered their respective territories with limited autonomy. Their survival depended on the pleasure of the British rulers and they had to live well within the bounds of the contract.

The Indian sub-continent was divided into two kinds of territories. One that directly came under the British rule-the *Khalsa* area - and the other ruled by the numerous princes - Indian India or the Princely States. Even if the administration in these two segments was separate, the British ensured a tight and complete control over the Princely States through their agents or plenipotentiaries. They could send packing any prince or Jagirdar any time at their will. That was a sort of their prerogative. A glaring example of the exercise of this authority in the 19th century was the deposition of Baroda Prince Malharrao Gaekwad.

This was the political scenario of Maharashtra. Winds of modernism had started blowing through the Maratha land against this backdrop.. A good many years towards the beginning of the 19th century were lost over the debate whether to impart to the natives 'Sanskrit' education or Western education in English. At long last, during the tenure of Lord Bentick, the government announced its policy, shaped by Lord Macaulay (1835) to impart education of Western sciences through English medium.

But much before that the Christian missionaries had started English schools, including those for girls, in Mumbai and Pune. In Mumbai in 1822 social activists like Jamshetji Jeejibhoy and Jagannath Shankarsheth set up 'The Bombay Native Education Society', for the spread of education. Shortly, the 'Elphinston Institution' was founded in 1827 in honour of Governor Elphinston who had retired. This institution started Elphinston School and Elphinston College. The Wilson High School was set up in 1834. Later, it grew up into a full-fledged college. In 1845, the 'Grant Medical College' was established. Earlier, in 1821, The 'Poona Sanskrit College' was set up. In the beginning this college was meant for Sanskrit and ancient studies. Afterwards, Western studies were included in its syllabus and it was transformed into 'Deccan College'.[3]

Primary schools were set up in important urban centers of Maharashtra like Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Ahmednagar. Missionaries were on the forefront of this activity. Soon, educated Indians with a passion for the spread of education started taking the lead. In all this, Governor Elphinston did a remarkable work. It was owing to his initiatives that many primary schools were set up. Importantly, he adopted a policy of imparting Western education through the medium of native languages. He pressed educationists into action to prepare special textbooks for schools. He got the required English books translated. He sincerely believed that it was the duty of the ruler to educate the subjects and make them knowledgeable. It was not that he did not know that the people made so wiser by Western education would eventually rebel against the foreign rule. Even so, Elphinstone refused to believe that all this would endanger the continuance of the British rule, in the near future.[4]

In the beginning, Mumbai and Pune happened to be the nerve centers of social

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awakening, in the Bombay Presidency because it was there that the centers of Western education were first set up. Establishment of the Board of Education in 1840, appointment of the Director of Education in 1855 and foundation of the Mumbai University in 1857 - all this lent a definite shape to the overall educational system in the Presidency.

Thus, the liberal education policy of the British opened the vista of Western education to the people of Maharashtra. Yet the benefits were bound to be limited to the cream of the natives. In Mumbai, the Parsees, *Prabhus (Kayasthas)* and Brahmins comprised this cream. They remained on the forefront of education. For instance, the caste-wise classification of the 152 students, who completed educational courses at the Elphinston Institution between 1827 and 1848 was as follows: *Prabhus* (71), Parsees (28), Brahmins (16), *Saraswat* Brahmins (16), and 25 from other castes. The Brahmins were far ahead of others in important cities like Pune, Kolhapur and Nagpur. For instance, in 1886, of the 982 students studying at the New English School in Pune as many as 911 were Brahmin.[5]

The above statistics throws enough light on education in the contemporary society. The Brahmins remained in the frontline of education throughout the 19th century. The reason is that for centuries, since the times of the Vedas, they were the leaders. Teaching and learning had been the Brahmin preserve; it was their 'religion'.

During the Maratha rule, the *Prabhus* were as advanced as the Brahmins. They matched the Brahmins in learning and civil administration. Shivaji made the best use of both these castes towards building the *'swaraj'*. But in the 18th century, the reins of power went into the hands of a *Chitpawan* (*Kokanastha* Brahmin) *Bhat* clan to mark the beginning of the Peshwa rule. The *Chitpawan* Brahmins came to the fore pushing aside the *Prabhus* and the *Deshasthas* among the Brahmins. They managed to get a firm hold over the affairs of the state. An excessive domination of the Brahmins over the society was established. The Brahmins started believing that the Peshwa rule was in fact the "Brahmin rule'. Commenting on this, Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade said, " After 1760, once the capital of the Maratha kingdom was shifted from Satara to Pune, Brahmins alone assumed prominence among the military barons, whose job was to undertake military campaigns. The white-collared non-Brahmins like the *Prabhus, Shenawis* etc. started finding it hard to stay afloat in the court at Pune. During the Peshwa rule, Brahmins sincerely believed that they were the real kings. Brahmins enjoyed many exclusive privileges. On many counts they were placed above the law. Brahmin clerks earning fat salaries in the court of the Peshwas bloated with self-importance. They didn't have to pay the octroi on import and export of goods. In criminal matters, the judicial penalties and fines for the Brahmins were minimal. Even in jails Brahmins were treated kindly, far better than others. The government made substantial provisions for giving alms and throwing religious feasts to Brahmins. This turned the city of Pune into a big centre of Brahmin beggars. Thirty to forty thousand Brahmins feasted themselves on elaborate meals for several days in a row. Thus Brahmin dominance was at its peak and stretched to ridiculous extent towards the end of the 18th century.'[6]

The Brahmins, who were strong and overpowering, were the first beneficiaries of Western education in the British rule. The

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Prabhus too benefited. But they supported the cause of the non-Brahmins during the social stir against Brahminism because the *Prabhus* were in minority and Brahmins never treated them as their equal.

Apart from Brahmins, the other important caste was Maratha. The creamy layer of this caste comprised the princely families, Jagirdars, Inamdars and Deshmukhs. But the overwhelming majority of the Marathas were small-time farmers, or Kunbis. The knowledge of alphabets was limited to the elite families of barons among the Marathas in the 19th century. They strongly believed that it was not they but the Brahmins, who were cut out for education and learning. When this was the thinking of the Maratha top brass, the *kunbis* and other Marathas on the lower rung could think of education only in their wildest dreams. This was the story of the *Kshatriyas*. No wonder, a large number of non-Maratha castes, the untouchables and womenfolk were totally deprived of education. The social reality was underlined by a contemporary proverb : *'Brahmanachya ghari lihine, Kunbyachya ghari dane ani Maharachya ghari gane!'* (Learning in the house of Brahmin, grains in the Kunbi house and singing in the house of *Mahar* !)

Educational liberalism was not the only motive behind the policies shaped by Elphinstone and Macaulay. The British rulers had only a handful of white men in the sub-continent and they would need a huge army of clerks to assist them in running their vast empire in India. To them, Sanskrit scholars were worthless. They needed English-knowing clerks. That was why they started English schools. They also, encouraged others to start a few more. This led to the rise of English-knowing clerks in Maharashtra by the middle of the 19th century. The spread of western education was steady and sure. Many colleges were set up in Mumbai, Pune, Kolhapur, Nagpur and other places. They produced a class of highly educated people. Most of them took up government jobs. But there were a few, who chose to plough lonely furrows. These men dedicated themselves to the task of running schools for uplifting compatriots, publishing newspapers for awakening and educating the society and building up organizations to put a stop to evil Hindu customs.

All this could happen solely because of the dissemination of 'English education'. But who got this education? The highbrow class of Brahmins was the beneficiary. There were two reasons behind it. First, the rulers had adopted the 'percolation theory' of Lord Macaulay in respect of education which assumed that once the upper strata of the society became knowledgeable, education would naturally percolate to the lower layers. This belief was convenient and advantageous to them. Second, the upper class of Brahmins too was eager to obtain education. Earlier, this class had occupied all the posts in the Peshwa administration. The question now was limited to changing the track. The Brahmins had smelt the changing times. They recognised that English education was the password of the new age. They accepted it and changed the track. The Brahmins came to occupy different posts in the British administration. They had already monopolised the religious affairs. Now they could extend their monopoly to the day-to-day affairs of the society that were related to governance. The cumulative effect was that the grip of the Brahmins over society grew firmer still.

There was no question of the non-

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Brahmin vast majority (the *Bahujan samaj*) changing its track in the new age. For, they were not at all on the track. They were totally deprived of education and the downtrodden were stricken with superstition, poverty and lack of education. Priests, moneylenders and bureaucrats exploited them. Famine often accompanied this consistent exploitation. The natural calamities took toll of millions. The general masses were as feeble and dumb as a lamb. The life of the untouchables was more miserable than those of animals. Their agonies could find no voice. No saviour was seen around.

The vast majority, illiterate, poverty-stricken and powerless, found the first ever champion of their cause in Mahatma Jotirao Phule. He understood that root-cause of all sorrows and sufferings of the masses was superstition and ignorance. Education was the only way to cure the society of these ills, he believed. For him, ignorance was synonymous with lack of education and it had reduced his brethren to a pitiable lot. Analyzing their miserable conditions, he wrote :

"Lack of education deprived sense ! Lack of sense deprived prudence !!
Lack of prudence deprived drive ! Lack of drive deprived wealth !!
Lack of wealth repressed the downtrodden ! Ignorance alone brought so many miseries !![7]

Mahatma Phule did not stop at merely dissecting the situation. He set out with a course of action to better the people's lot. He set up a few schools in Pune for the boys and girls for the untouchable communities of *Mahar* and *Mang*. He needed a female teacher for the girls' school. So he educated his illiterate wife and made her the teacher. This was unfolding in the middle of the 19th century. Mahatma Phule had made a resolve to make Macaulay's "Percolation theory' stand on its head. His conviction was that education ought to rise from down to above. This revolutionary belief immediately related Phule to the spirit of universal values of humanism and social justice.

Mahatma Phule hoisted the flag of rebellion on behalf of the backward and ignorant masses against the all-pervading domination of the Brahmin, Brahmin monopoly of learning and religion, and their gross misuse of religious and cultural authority to impose slavery on the backward masses. The clergy cheated the masses under this or that guise. The Brahmin administrative staff exploited the subjects. In the second half of the 19th century, Phule openly challenged this oppressive Brahminism which had become almost invincible over the centuries.

Mahatma Phule thoroughly dissected the phony Brahminism and its oppressive priesthood in his books *'Brahmananche kasab'* (The Brahmin's craft), *'Gulamgiri'* (Slavery) and *'Shetkaryacha Asud'* (Farmer's whip) to display the hideous viscera before the masses of have-nots. On the basis of his readings, Phule explained the sociological origin of Brahminical dominance and the total slavery it produced: *Aryabhatt* gangs from Iran invaded this country and completely defeated, tyrannized and enslaved the original inhabitants of the region. They fabricated a religion, constructed a caste structure under it and to ensure its continuance promoted unjust scriptures and repressive laws. They declared themselves as the Lords of the earth, converted the *Bahujan samaj* into slaves and shackled them down.

Mahatma Phule did not stop at theoretical explanations. He founded an organization *'Satyashodhak Samaj'* (society

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of seekers of truth) to wage a war against Brahmin dominance. The main thrust of Phule's teaching was that all men were created by the same Creator (*Nirmik)* and no mediator was required to worship Him. The Mahatma wrote a book "Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak' to guide the followers of the *Samaj* to repudiate the phony Brahmin religion and to embrace the '*Satyadharma'* (religion of truth), whose guiding principle was truthfulness. In this book, he hailed the ideals of Freedom, Equality and Universal Brotherhood and founded a humane religion, which sought to encompass the entire humanity, with its basis that the whole universe was a single family. This book became the 'Bible' of the *Satyashodhak* activists. It was a 'Charter of Human Rights' aimed at the emancipation of the vast majority called the *Bahujan Samaj* that had been cursed by ignorance and poverty for centuries. Phule's philosophy and work was the concrete reaction inspired by the Western education. It should be noted that Phule was basically inspired by the humanitarian work done by the Christian missionaries in Maharashtra, humanism propounded by Jesus Christ as also the books like "Rights of Man' and "Age of Reason' written by the celebrated rebel Western philosopher Thomas Paine.

The defiant yet progressive reaction of Western education that the contemporary society witnessed in Phule's work was a matter of exception so far as the *Bahujan Ssamaj* was concerned. Much before Phule, educated Brahmin youths had unfurled the flag of social and religious reforms. The reformist ideas bred by Western education found voice in Maharashtra when Acharya Balshastri Jambhekar launched in 1832 his periodical *'Darpan'* (Mirror). This was the voice of the new era, of renaissance! In his periodical, Balshastri put forth his progressive views, passionately supporting reforms like widow remarriage, adult marriage and women's education. In those days, even to talk of such reforms was an adventure. Balshastri died an untimely death, in 1846. After him, it was *Lokhitvadi* Gopal Hari Deshmukh, who attempted to awaken the society, particularly the Brahmins, with whiplashes of his pen. He repeatedly launched through his column *'Shatpatra'* (The Hundred Letters)(1848-50) tirades against Brahmins, whom he considered thoroughly immoral and who cared the least for religion. Often, he addressed them as 'Fools' and 'Beasts'. He launched blistering attacks against evil social customs like communalism, superstition, rituals, child marriage, marriage of child girls to old men, shaving heads of widows clean etc. Lokhitvadi zealously supported reforms like remarriage of widows, adult marriage and women's education.

The social reform movement in Maharashtra triggered off by Jambhekar and Lokhitvadi produced great many social reformers like Bhau Mahajan, Vishnubuwa Brahmachari, Vishnushastri Pandit, Dadoba Pandurang, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Dr. Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade and Principal Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. These social reformers left no stone unturned to remove the evil and wretched customs from the Hindu religion. Often, they had to face public wrath. Their role in the history of Maharashtra's enlightenment has been magnificent. Yet the fact remains that barring a few exceptions, most reformers came from the Brahmin caste and their ideas of reforms mostly pertained to the Brahmins alone. So, the reform movement moved in a rut of issues concerning the top brass of the society like,

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widow remarriage, child marriage, shaving the heads of widows, women's education, religious rituals etc. The ideals and work of the reformist bodies like the *Brahmo Samaj* or *Prarthana Samaj* could not percolate down to the lower strata of the society.

The British rule and the spread of Western education evoked yet another and rather strange reaction in a section of the elite Brahmins. It was of reactionary nature. There emerged a class among Maharashtrian Brahmins which nursed hatred for the British rule, looked forward to invoke intense national pride and commended Hindu religion and traditions as the source of that pride.. Their source of inspiration was Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, the author of the journal *'Nibandhmala'* started in 1874. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who later came to be known as *'Lokmanya'*, was his associate. Vishnushastri was furious over political slavery and through his powerful essays in the *'Nibandhmala'* created a fierce nationalist spirit among the people so essential for the freedom struggle. This was undoubtedly a commendable contribution. But afflicted with the Brahmin superiority syndrome and proud of religious traditions including oppressive customs, he chose to become an enemy of the religious reformers. This had a far-reaching effect on the social history of Maharashtra.

Chiplunkar kept harping that there was nothing wrong with social health just when Lokhitavadi and Mahatma Phule were crying hoarse to convince the people that the Hindu society had reached a moral nadir owing to outdated wretched customs in the religion and therefore urgently needed a very strong dose of medicine. Vishnushastri said : "There is nothing wrong with the country. The pulse is all right. No ailment worth its name is bothering the body. Our modern-day scholars are following the modern medicinal system, have started administering strong doses and have performed deep surgical operations. In effect, the body is being tortured and offended without reason. We have absolutely no doubt that it would look strong and glowing as before if we stop all this and start simple nutritious treatment. It is not because of our incurable shortcomings that the nation appears to be in a bad shape. It is because all nations normally face and have faced such situations."[8]

The writings of Lokhitvadi and Mahatma Phule offended Vishnushastri's Brahminical pride. A hurt Vishnushastri ruthlessly attacked Phule. About the quality of language used by Phule in his books, the Shastri wrote in derogatory terms : "but our *shudra* founder of the religion is making merry! He doesn't even have knowledge of grammar and that of how to write the language with purity... Under these circumstances I suggest my *shudra* brother to forget for a while his hobby of analyzing the *Shrutis* and *Smritis*. First, he should take lessons in grammar and writing....."[9]

These comments only highlight Vishnushastri's banal arrogance springing from his Brahmin superiority syndrome. On yet another occasion, he writes : "My suggestion to Mr. Phule is that his purpose would never be served by producing books like *'Gulamgiri'* and by abusing those, who remained superior to him in all respects. That is if at all he cared to be duty-bound to improve the lot of the people of his caste. However wretched or sly the Brahmins may be, reality is they hold the keys to knowledge and other castes cannot partake

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of this knowledge without their co-operation."[10]

Lokmanya Tilak did not brazenly display his Brahminical arrogance but he very much belonged to Vishnushastri's cult. Initially, Tilak and his friend, who later earned name as a great social reformer-Principal Gopal Ganesh Agarkar-belonged to the Vishnushastri camp. Tilak and Agarkar were with Vishnushastri while launching newspapers - *Kesari* and *Mahratta* in 1881. But basically Agarkar was a stern reformist and deep thinker. Tilak backed conservatives and wanted to go slow with social reforms. Reforms should be made with the consent of the people step by step and only those should be undertaken which were very essential. Agarkar provided intellectual leadership to the reformists and always insisted on immediate, fundamental reforms in all spheres of social life, once he was intellectually convinced. Intellectual differences of opinion on social issues between the two were inevitable. The rift between the two widened and in 1887 Agarkar walked out of the *Kesari - Mahratta* newspapers and started his own periodical - *Sudharak* (Reformer). Around this time, a great debate over women's education was raging in Maharashtra. Agarkar insisted on imparting the same quality of education to both boys and girls, while Tilak was opposed to it. Later in 1891, Tilak vehemently opposed the bill pertaining to the marriage consent age on the basis of the diktats of the Hindu scriptures and demonstrated that he was very much an unyielding leader of the conservatives.[11]

Commenting subtly on the conflict between the progressives and reactionaries during the last two decades of the 19th century, Tarkateertha Laxmanshastri Joshi writes : "The reaction of the reactionaries hid the miseries of the past history as also the past as such and justified the forces responsible for degeneration. The reformist reaction underlined the accurate meaning of the past and history and pinpointed the secret of progress."[12]

One cannot afford to disregard the contribution made by Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade, in a quick review of social history of the 19th century Maharashtra. He played a role of the steward of Maharashtra's social movement and the campaign for enlightenment during the last three decades of the 19th century. He insisted on 'all-round reforms' in all spheres of social life like politics, social service, religion and economics. The social movements he launched for the people's awakening ranged from renovation of Shivaji's monument atop Raigadh fort to the pressing problems of the famine-stricken farmers. He was behind founding many organisations like *Prarthana Samaj, Sarvajanik Sabha, Samajik Parishad* and *Audyogik Parishad.* His contribution to the national freedom movement had been monumental. At the national level, he laid the foundation of the progressive politics of the native Indians. In the words of Tilak, Justice Ranade performed the 'difficult task of blowing warmth of life into the cold, lifeless mass' of Maharashtra.

Justice Ranade conducted affairs of the *'Sarvajanik Sabha'* in Pune, since 1871, with the assistance of his colleague Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi (*Sarvajanik Kaka*). Many issues such as the responsible system of governance for India to the riots of the famine-hit farmers were raised by the "Sarvjanik Sabha'. Tilak captured the Sabha with a majority in 1895. The same year, Tilak's followers succeeded in driving out of the Congress session the Ranade-sponsored *'Samajik Parishad'* (Social Conference). Till that day, this social conference used to be regularly held in the Congress sessions. The cohorts of Tilak

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toed an adamant line that the issue of national freedom alone should be discussed in the Congress forum and that social issues should not be raised there. This was a massive setback to social reform movements in Maharashtra and the country as a whole.

There were Hindu-Muslim riots in Mumbai in 1893. Tilak sided with the Hindus. It was against that backdrop that he initiated public celebration of the annual Ganesh festival. Soon, he bolstered it up with Shivaji festival. These initiatives won him the leadership of the Brahmin clique of Pune, a die-hard reactionary group when it came to social issues. These Brahmins were politically conscious people with a nationalistic fervor, though. This politically powerful group fully backed Tilak and he was not willing to hurt them. This was why Tilak had to adopt on many occasions reactionary posture on social issues.

Armed resistance to the British rule in Maharashtra ought to be taken note of. Much before 1857, the revolt of the *Ramoshis* under Umaji Naik between 1826 and 1831 in the Pune- Satara area and the mutiny of the Gadkaris (chiefs of forts) from the forts of Samangadh, Panhala and Vishalgadh in Kolhapur state in 1844 are a few examples.[13] But the British crushed them with their heavy military apparatus. The echoes of the 1857 Indian rising were heard in Maharashtra in places like Kolhapur, Satara and Nagpur. But the British were quick to act to bulldoze the resistance. They punished the mutineers harshly to create scare even as they crushed the uprising in the other parts of the country too. The image of the British Raj, however, was sullied in the process. To rectify, fundamental changes in the method of governance were initiated. The East India company's writ was abolished and the rule of the queen of England was proclaimed. The Queen's proclamation gave generous promises to the people of India.

It must be noted that the educated class of Maharashtra chose to remain loyal to the British and did not participate in the uprising. The common man remained helpless. The common belief that the British rule could be toppled with armed struggle was demolished with the failure of the 1857 insurgency. However, this did not mean that no further armed struggles were attempted. There were sporadic instances of armed resistance to the British rule. In 1879, though Vasudeo Balwant Phadke's armed revolt with the help of the Brahmin, Koli, Mang, Mahar and Muslim communities in the Pune area failed its impact was far-reaching. Vasudeo Balwant was arrested and the revolt was suppressed. Yet the British rulers, especially officers of the ilk of Hume - who later took initiative in founding the Congress - were disturbed immensely. They felt a pressing need to have a political platform to give vent to the discontent and aspirations of the native Indians. Later, such a platform was created, in 1885, in the shape of the Indian National Congress.

Assassination of Rand by Chaphekar brothers in 1897 in Pune was the next jolt to the British after Phadke's revolt. In that year, the epidemic of Plague created havoc in Pune. But the English officer Rand, who was deputed to handle the situation, caused more distress to the people. The Chaphekar brothers took revenge by killing Rand's on the day of diamond jubilee celebrations for Queen Victoria. That angered the rulers to no end. Tilak launched fiery attack on the atrocities of the rulers in his paper *Kesari*. The government prosecuted him for his 'seditious' articles, managed to hold him guilty of treason and sentenced him to one and a half years' imprisonment. At heart Tilak was sympathetic to the Chaphekar

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brothers, but had taken care not to side with them openly.[14]

The rulers deemed the armed revolt by Vasudeo Balwant and Rand assassination as acts of treason. But enraged by the British tyranny, some Marathi youth held Chaphekar brothers in high esteem for their patriotic act. They inspired armed revolutionaries like *Swatantryaveer* Savarkar, in Maharashtra. A large number of terrorist groups mushroomed in important cities like Pune, Kolhapur, Wardha and Nagpur. 'Shivaji Club' was one such group in Kolhapur.

Even as the terrorist patriots became active in the last decades of the 19th century this period also witnessed the formation of the nation-wide organizations like the Indian National Congress (1885) wedded to parliamentary struggles. During this period, Congress sessions were held in Maharashtra at Mumbai, Nagpur and Pune. The birth of the Congress was the culmination of the nationalist spirit shaping gradually during the 19th century. In a way, it was an important political outcome of Western education at the national level. Leaders from Maharashtra played prominent role in formation of the Congress. Many Marathi natives like Ranade, Bhandarkar, Telang, Nulkar, Mhaske, Apte and Agarkar attended the first session of the Congress along with Dadabhai Nowrojee and Phirojshah Mehta of Bombay.

On establishment of the British rule in Maharashtra, two generations of the natives were mesmerised by its power and impact of the Western knowledge it brought. These English educated people sincerely believed that the British rule was nothing less than an arrangement made by God to make the foolish Hindu people wiser. Lokhitvadi,in his *Shatapatra* expressed this representative sentiment in 1849. More or less, this remained the outlook of the Marathi leadership till the end of the 19th century. This sentiment was also shared by Justice Ranade, the great reformer of Maharashtra and a pillar of the Congress. In his opinion, it was as per the divine arrangement that the British came to this country to establish a rule of law and bring peace. Therefore, their job was to make and implement the law and our duty, as the subjects, was to obey it religiously, he believed. He felt that the British should treat the native Indians as equals, as per the Queen's Proclamation and in return the natives should remain loyal to them. He had faith in the conscience of the rulers. His ultimate political goal was to win a sort of an autonomy under the British masters. He wanted the British to train the natives in the skills of administration and natives to engage themselves in a moderate campaign with legitimate means to achieve that. This view of Ranade came to be known as the "Moderate Policy". The Congress accepted it in the initial period.

In Maharashtra, particularly in Pune, a group of extremist youths under Chiplunkar, Tilak and Agarkar, who detested this moderate approach, began emerging. After 1870, the plight of the common man had worsened. The cumulative effect of the famine-like natural calamities, the government's policy of ruthless collection of revenue from farmers and their merciless exploitation by moneylenders was complete pauperization of the common people. Governor General Litton squandered millions of rupees to hold *darbar* in Delhi with a great pomp to pronounce that the British Queen had become the "Empress of India" even as thousands of people and cattle were starved to death in the agonising famine of 1876-77 in India. Such acts of the government were certainly rubbing salt into the wounds

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of the natives. On top of it, Litton promulgated an ordinance to throttle the voice of the native press. It was on this backdrop that Tilak and Agarkar gave voice to their radical political ideas in the decade of 1880. In course of time, the two differed over social issues. Agarkar followed a radical social line and Tilak marched on with a radical political programme. Tilak did not find the social or religious issues as urgent as political ones. He gave priority to political struggle over social reforms.. The terrible famine conditions of 1896-97, the havoc of Plague and atrocities of the administration that followed and arrogance and carelessness of the government gave a sharper edge to Tilak's radical thinking.

Tilak aroused the wrath of the people over the government's unjust policies with his fiery writings in *Kesari*. To organise people, he had launched public celebrations of Ganesh and Shivaji festivals. He became remarkably active in the Congress organization. As a result he emerged as the leader of the radical nationalist party towards the end of the 19th century in Maharashtra. But the Congress still was under the influence of the moderate leaders and it remained so for a long time. Meanwhile, Agarkar died an untimely death in 1895. Radical social reform movement lost its prime leader and consequently, its momentum. The Brahmin youth of Pune was completely swayed by Tilak's line of radical politics.

PRE-SHAHU KOLHAPUR STATE

Like the other Princely States of India, the state of Kolhapur too started coming under the sphere of influence of the British from the beginning of the 19th century. During the reign of Shivaji Chhatrapati II in 1812, the British imposed a treaty in which there was an article: "The Chhatrapati shall not be engaged in a war against any foreign power without consultation with the British Government. In such an eventuality, the matter should first be referred to the government (the Company) for a final disposal by them."[15] This article ended the sovereignty of the Kolhapur State for the first time. The British forced some curbs on the army of the Kolhapur State in 1826. They imposed yet another treaty, in 1829, with an article: "In view of ensuring a better administration of the Chhatrapati, a responsible officer of the choice of the Company Government shall be appointed. He shall be given the authority of the administration."[16] With this treaty the command and control of both the military and civil administration of the Kolhapur Chhatrapati went into the hands of the East India Company.

The Company appointed in 1844 Daji Krishna Pandit as their *Karbhari* (chief administrator) to look after the affairs of the Kolhapur State on their behalf.. The *Gadkaris* in the Kolhapur State revolted during the tenure of Daji Krishna. The British skilfully crushed the revolt and set up a new arrangement which prescribed for appointment of a Political Superintendent with military and civil powers. That time Babasaheb Chahatrapati was a minor. So the entire administration had to be in the hands of the Political Superintendent till the time the Prince attained majorty. Major Graham was appointed as the first Political Superintendent of the Kolhapur State (1845). Later in 1861, the post of Political Superintendent was upgraded to that of 'Political Agent'.

Babasaheb *Maharaj* was given the charge in 1864 on his attaining majority. But he wielded authority for less than two years before he died. Another minor Chhatrapati Rajaram succeeded to the throne. The administration remained in the hands of the British agent again (1866). Kolhapur was

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about to get a sensible and prudent king in Rajaram. But misfortune again struck. He died at Florence in Italy (1870) while on the tour of Europe. The administration was back into the hands of the British. Then came to the throne an unfortunate Prince, Shivaji Chhatrapati IV-(1871). He was just nine then. The British continued to rule Kolhapur through their agent. A diehard and arrogant Brahmin officer Madhavrao Barve was appointed as 'Diwan' at that time. Kolhapur Court became the hotbed of conspiracies and black deeds towards the fag end of the tenure of Shivaji IV. They went to the extent of declaring the King as lunatic and jailed him in the Ahmednagar fort, where he was physically tortured and killed by the British soldiers, in December 1883. Earlier in 1882, the Regency Council was set up and the Jagirdar from Kagal Sr. Jaisingrao alias Abasaheb Ghatge was appointed as the Regent. He was nephew of Babasaheb Chhatrapati and a son of the maternal aunt of Rajaram who died at Florence. Abasaheb Ghatge's eldest son, Yashwantrao, came to the throne of Kolhapur on March 17th, 1884 as Shahu Chhatrapati. He assumed power of the Kolhapur State on April 2nd, 1894.

This in nutshell is the history of the pre-Shahu Kolhapur. Kolhapur was a sovereign state at the beginning of the 19th century. But it slipped slowly in a span of 50 to 60 years under the influence of the British imperial power and in the end was reduced to a puppet state. It was misfortune of Kolhapur that it witnessed rules of minor princes for over half a century. Before Shahu Chhatrapati ascended the throne, the British virtually ruled the State. During that half-century, the subjects never saw their own king's rule. To them, that wretched half-century proved to be a dark age.

In the pre-Shahu period the tenure of Diwan Barve particularly was in sharp focus for numerous black deeds. The heart-rending tales of mental torture of Shivaji IV, which shook the whole Maharashtra, emanated from the events in this period. Tilak and Agarkar supported the unfortunate king in *Kesari* and were sentenced for that crime. Barve was an arrogant and overbearing bureaucrat. He was fiercely proud of his *Chitpawan* Brahmin caste. He recruited only the *Chitpawans* for the posts ranging from the chief revenue officer to the peons. Barve had to go in 1884. Meherji Taraporewala, a Parsi, replaced him. He recruited all the Parsis. The caste-wise break-up of the staff of the Kolhapur State, when Shahu Chhatrapati was installed as the King (1894) was: of the 71 officers in the Kolhapur Court 60 were Brahmins and 11 from other castes. Of the 52 officers from the private staff of the King, (*Khasgi*) 45 were Brahmins and seven others. The others include British, Indian Christians, Parsis and Prabhus. The State was known as a Maratha state. But the Marathas had neither any place nor say in the administration. Those who had monopolized education had monopolized the seats of power in the administration too.

Among the educated the Brahmin percentage was 80; the Marathas, Jains, Lingayats and Muslims comprised the remaining 20 percent.[17]

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- 2 -

BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

The Ghatges of Kagal in the Kolhapur region was noble family with a high reputation at Bijapur Court of Adilshahi Sultanate. Adilshah himself had awarded the title of 'Sarjerao' to a brave Maratha warrior of the family, Bhanaji Ghatge. Later, Bhanaji's successor Vitthalrao joined the Great Shivaji's historic endeavours to win freedom for the people from alien rulers. There was another family connection with Shivaji the Great. One of his daughters-in-law Rajasabai hailed from the Ghatge family. The relations became closer still even after establishment of the Kolhapur *gadi** when Shivaji II of Kolhapur gave his daughter Aaubai in marriage to Yashwantrao Ghatge. Later Narayanarao Ghatge from the same family was married to Balabai, sister of Shivaji III of Kolhapur - (1838-1866). Balabai gave birth to Jaysingrao alias Abasaheb (1856), the father of our protagonist.

Being the Chhatrapati's nephew, Abasaheb spent most of his childhood in the Kolhapur palace under regal discipline. He was married to the Princess of Mudhol Radhabai at the age of 8. Abasaheb grew into an intelligent, energetic and mature man and he built an efficient administrative system in Kagal Jahagir of the Ghatges which soon acquired for him the reputation of being an ideal and efficient among the feudal vassals (*Jahagirdars*) of Kolhapur State.

Abasaheb and Radhabai were blessed with a son on June 26, 1874, at Kolhapur.[1] The boy named Yashwantrao was destined to ascend the *gadi* of Kolhapur as the Chhatrapati. On January 3, 1876, Radhabai gave birth to another son Bapusaheb who like Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Rama, stood steadfast with the elder brother till the end.

SHAHU'S INSTALLATION

Meanwhile, Babasaheb Maharaj, who was on the *gadi* as Shivaji III was followed by Chhatrapati Rajaram (1866) a minor in age but an intelligent youth of modern outlook with potential of being a good administrator. The King being of minor age, the British

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* A seat of government or throne.

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agent retained the upper hand in the administration of the princely state. Unfortunately, he met an untimely death during a journey to Europe at Florence in Italy (1870). Shivaji IV at the age of 9 succeeded him (1871) and again the reins remained firmly in hands of the British. The court atmosphere became thick with intrigues and conspiracies. To make the matters worse, the British appointed a shrewed Brahmin politician, Mahadeo Barve, as the Diwan or the Prime Minister of the State. Barve was an arrogant official and his insolence soon caused a grave rift between the Chhatrapti and himself.

The last years of the reign of Shivaji IV came under a shadow owing to heightened intrigues. Finally a conspiracy was hatched and executed by intriguers by which Shivaji IV was declared a psychologically disturbed person and handed over to the British custody. The British Government appointed Abasaheb Ghatge as the regent for the intervening period. While in custody at the Ahmednagar fort with a tag of insanity, the King was subjected to inhuman abuse and brutal treatment. He died there in suspicious circumstances on December 25, 1883.

Once again there was a vacuum as Shivaji IV had left no son. After much deliberation and consultations with dowager queens of the Chhatrapati family, it was decided that the widow of Shivaji IV should adopt a son for the Kolhapur *gadi.* In consultation with the family, the British selected regent Abasaheb Ghatge's son Yashwantrao to be the next Chhatrapati. Rani Anandibai of Shivaji IV lawfully adopted Yashwantrao on March 17, 1884. Thus Yashwantrao from the Ghatges of Kagal was installed on the *gadi* as Shahu Chhatrapati. British Political Agent Reeves, who supervised the adoption ceremony, declared Shahu Chhatrapati to be the 'Raja' of Kolhapur awaiting coronation which incidentally took place a decade later on April 2, 1894. Reeves also declared that till official coronation the British Government intended to send Shahu to England for higher education in administration and in order to develop his personality.[2]

EDUCATION OF SHAHU

Shahu's formal education initially began under the supervision of a British officer Fitzgerald. His younger brother Bapusaheb, his young uncle Kakasaheb Ghatge of the same age and Dattajirao Ingle were his fellow students. Krishnaji Gokhale and Haripant Gokhale were appointed as the native teachers.

In the meantime, on a visit to England father Abasahedb closely observed the conditions there and decided that it would be inappropriate to send the would be Chhatrapati to England at such a young age-(September 1885). Consequently, in consultation with the British, Shahu was sent to the famous Rajkumar College at Rajkot in January 1886 along with his fellow students. The two teachers, the Gokhales, and a trusted Sardar of the Darbar, Buwasaheb Ingle, also accompanied them as their guardian. Here at Rajkot Shahu received a wholesome education broadening his mind and thinking. He also developed friendship with several young princes of princely states. The particularly enduring friendship was with the Prince of Bhavnagar Bhavsinghji.

Hardly two months after joining the Rajkot college, Shahu's father Abasaheb fell ill and died suddenly on March 20, 1886 when he was hardly 30 years in age. A great calamity had befallen the State. Shahu had

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already lost his mother when he was 3 and now with the loss of the father when he was barely 12, he was orphaned. He went home to Kolhapur with his brother for the last rites and subsequent rituals and returned to Rajkot to continue his studies.

Besides the regular subjects Shahu was also trained in shooting, wrestling and horse riding. He picked up these manly sports effortlessly and eventually was acknowledged as an expert in the nuances of these skills. In between he had to visit Kolhapur for the foundation ceremony of Kolhapur-Miraj Railway. This was his first public function after he became the Chhatrapati (May 8, 1888).[3]

FRASER, HIS TEACHER

William Lee-Warner held the position of the British Political Agent of Kolhapur State at the time of Abasaheb's death. Lee Warner, a liberal and cultured man, was a close friend of the latter. On his deathbed, Abasaheb had given some special instructions to him regarding the future of Shahu. He had expressed his desire that his children should be imparted proper education under the supervision of an intelligent British guardian. As per his wish, Lee Warner appointed a British ICS officer Stuart Mitford Fraser as a teacher and guardian of Shahu and his fellow students.[4] Eventually, Shahu left Rajkot for Kolhapur (April 1889) and from there to Dharwad where Fraser took charge of his wards and thus began Shahu's rigorous education. Bhavnagar's Prince Bhavsinghji also accompanied him to Dharwar. Keshavrao Gokhale, scholarly man of principles with high moral rectitude, was appointed as a native teacher. Buwasaheb Ingle also stayed at Dharwar as the native guardian of the children. He honed Shahu's skills in riding, hunting, shooting and wrestling. Guru Fraser also praised Buwasaheb's sincerity, honesty and loyalty.

Fraser, who taught the boys English language, Mathematics, History, Geography and Economics, sent regular reports to the Political Agent at Kolhapur regarding the progress of his wards. In one of his reports, he says, "In disposition, His Highness is healthy-minded, open, generous and truthful. He is totally free from bumptiousness and I have seen many little instances of unselfishness and thoughtfulness on his part which show that he is as good natured as he looks."[5]

EDUCATIONAL TOURS

Shahu had studied History and Geography. However, he would get the real feel of these subjects when he visited the places and regions where notable events of history had happened. He should also be aware of the condition of his fellow countrymen as also their socio-religious make-up and traditions. With these intentions Fraser organized comprehensive educational tours for his students across North, South and East India. The first was tour of North India which took off from Nasik in November 1890. The group visited Banaras, Allahabad, Calcutta, Darjeeling, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi, Jaipur, Ajmer and Bombay before returning home. The five-thousand mile long journey which involved interactions with people of various kinds was an enormously rewarding experience for young Shahu which broadened his knowledge and made him sensitive to the problems of the people. Commercialization of religion at holy places like Nasik, Varanasi and Prayag made him sick of degenerated rituals and practices. At the same time, the beauty of

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the Himalayas and its glowing snow-clad peaks stirred profound spiritual sparks in his heart.[6]

Next year in 1991, Fraser took the young men to South India and Ceylone (now Sri Lanka). The group visited Bijapur, Hyderabad, Madras, Pondicherry, Tanjore, Tutikorin, Columbo and Candy. On the return journey, they visited Banglore and Mysore too. Shahu was warmly received at Tanjore, a small principality of the Marathas established by Vyankoji, younger brother of Shivaji the Great. He experienced similarly touching warmth at Mysore and Hyderabad.The British Governor in Ceylone accorded a welcome to Shahu and his party befitting a prince of an Indian state.[7]

The third educational trip made in 1892 was of a special kind when Shahu visited a number of princely states in Western India such as Baroda, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Alwar and Bharatpur. He also visited Mathura, Allahabad, Haridwar, Amritsar, Lahor, Peshawar, Sakkar, Multan and Karachi before returning to Bombay. The rulers of Baroda, Jasipur and Jodhpur welcomed Shahu with great love. He was presented with an address at Allahabad by the Arya Samaj. At Karachi, Shahu stayed in a bungalow where Chimasaheb, the brother of Shivaji III, was kept under arrest on account of his participation in the 1857 insurgency. Chimasaheb languished in the bungalow till his death in 1869. Shahu visited his tomb and paid his homage.[8]

A happy occasion arose in the midst of the rigors of education under Fraser's watchful eye. It was Shahu's wedding with Lakshmibai, daughter of Sardar Gunajirao Khanvilkar of Baroda on April 1, 1891.[9] The royal wedding was an occasion for much pomp and pageantry. After the ceremony, Shahu attended the inauguration of Kolhapur-Miraj railway at the hands of the Governor of Bombay, Lord Harris on April 20. On the same day, the Governor also inaugurated an industrial exhibition in Kolhapur.

LAST PHASE OF EDUCATION

Shahu's native teacher Keshavrao Gokhale retired at the end of 1891 and Raghunath Vyankaji Sabnis was appointed in his place by the British Government. Sabnis was a graduate from Bombay University and the headmaster of a Government High School at Thane. Sincere, honest and kind of nature, Sabnis was an admirer of Arya Samaj. His heart also bled for the unfortunate 'untouchable' people.

Shahu returned from Dharwar to Kolhapur in January 1893. Education and coaching continued there till the middle of November. Simultaneously he participated in public functions and received instructions in the art of governance. Fraser delivered to him special lectures on Jurisprudence and Legislation. Shahu was also imparted instructions in the police system and its functioning, the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.

Fraser after having satisfied himself with Shahu's formal education, took him on visits throughout the State along with brother Bapusaheb. These visits made profound impact on Shahu who learnt much about the social, economic and cultural conditions of his subjects from the high hills of the Sahyadris to the fertile lands of the East. During these tours, Shahu saw for himself the life of the people and made it a point to talk to them extensively of their woes and problems. Shahu was the first Raja in the history of Kolhapur who had come out of the palace to intermingle with his people. For years, the people had

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not witnessed this kind of interaction with their ruler. Now, their Raja, who had come of an age, was soon to take over his powers at a grand coronation ceremony at Kolhapur in 1894.

ACCESSION: HARBINGER OF GOOD LUCK

On April 2nd, 1894, a special Dabar was held where Shahu Chhatrapati acceded the throne. Governor Lord Harris attended the accession ceremony. The new King took charge of the Kolhapur State. At long last what the people of Kolhapur had been eagerly waiting for, had happened. This was some development that immensely pleased the whole lot of the Marathi people. Congratulating the new King in his editorial in *Kesari*, Lokmanya Tilak described this event thus: "It is a moment of great delight for the entire Maharashtra. More so, to the subjects of the Kolhapur State, this happy turn of fate has brought a moment of unprecedented ecstasy and good luck."[1]

People of entire Maharashtra shared the sentiment of high reverence for the throne of the Kolhapur State as it belonged to the descendants of Shivaji the Great. Moreover, it symbolised a great historical and cultural heritage of the *Hindavi Swaraj* (self-rule of the natives). That made the key social figures of the contemporary Maharashtra like Tilak and Gopal Krishna Gokhale expectantly look up to the Kolhapur Chhatrapati to perform his duties towards Maharashtra as well as the Indian nation. It was felt that the leadership of Maharashtra naturally went to him. Tilak wrote: "... History has registered the high reputation won by the descendants of those who founded the Kolhapur State by their great deeds and fierce patriotism. True, the times have changed. Yet a lot many things remain to be done for the welfare of the people of the Kolhapur State, Maharashtra and India by the descendants of Shivaji the Great, the pride of Maharashtra. Commitment of the clan of the Kolhapur rulers is to possess a reasonable pride of Hinduism and to make physical sacrifices while working selflessly for the uplift of the people. We pray God to give wisdom, courage and long life to the Shahu Chhatrapati to honour this commitment and that he be consistently successful and flourish for ever. "[2]

The 'Sarvajanik Sabha' organised grand felicitations for Shahu, when he visited Pune shortly after his accession. Welcoming the King on behalf of the Sabha, Prof. Gopal Krishna Gokhale said: ".....All people believe that the throne of Kolhapur is a visible symbol of the valour of Marathas. The people from all over Maharashtra, including those who are not the subjects of Kolhapur State, would continue to have deep love and reverence for the Chhatrapati freshly coronated...Undoubtedly, your first duty is to strive for happiness and progress of your subjects. However, it is also your duty to work for the progress of the motherland and particularly of Maharashtra. This is an important obligation next only to your duties towards your subjects."[3]

Eventually, both Tilak and Gokhale emerged as leaders of not only Maharashtra but also India. Shahu was yet to prove his mettle. Their expectations were not inappropriate considering the great importance of the Kolhapur throne. Strangely enough, in course of time Tilak became his main 'enemy', when Shahu set out to perform the duties expected of him towards Maharashtra and the nation.

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At the time of accession, Shahu was barely a twenty years' youth. His foremost duty was towards his subjects - to extend a benevolent rule and eradicate their poverty and miserable plight. In his very first charter he declared that ensuring people's happiness and welfare was his primary objective. The charter began with *"Swastisree Rajyabhishek Shakay 220 Vijaynam Sanvastare Falgun Vadya 11, Induvasare Kshatriyakulawatans Sreeraja Shahu Chhatrapati Yajkadun"* (indication of the day of the calendar which began from coronation of Shivaji the Great) and ended with a prayer unto God: "our intense desire is that all our subjects remain in constant bliss and happiness, they prosper consistently and our State flourish in all the respects. We believe that all our small and big jagirdars, relatives, knights, barons, inamdars, labourers, traders and generally all the subjects with a great purity of mind and loyalty to the throne would assist us in fulfilling our desire. I pray the God Almighty, who controls the affairs of the whole world, to bless our tenure with longevity and success."[4]

The opening sentences of the above-mentioned Charter are impregnated with a great meaning. Shahu very much wanted to imply that these opening sentences were those from the royal order of Shivaji the great, the founder of the *Hindavi Swaraj*, that he was his descendant and that he inherited his great legacy and goodwill. The ultimate aim of the *Hindavi Swaraj* was the welfare and happiness of the subjects and King Shahu underlined the same objective in the prayer at the end of his Charter.

THE KING DID WHAT HE SAID

Invoking the aims and objectives of the rule of Shivaji the Great by Shahu Maharaj in his first charter was not just a ritual. It sprang from his passionate commitment towards the welfare of the common man. This was evident from the first official order that his regime issued in less than 12 days of his accession. The order concerned the daily miseries of his subjects in far-flung villages. The King used to undertake tours across the State for hunting or other missions. He had noticed that often during such outings the staff of the State habitually extracted the required goods and commodities from the subjects, without making any payment. A sensitive Shahu knew this was atrocious and unjust and put an end to this insidious practice by his first order. The order says: "experience tells us that when His Highness himself sets out on hunting and camps out, the revenue officer of the area directs the concerned police inspector to look after the princely retinue. The police officer directs the constables under him to follow the order. Policemen then go to the villages around and obtain goats, poultry, eggs and other commodities from the people. When the retinue leaves the camp, the clerk from the private staff of H.H. checks accounts with his revenue officer and is supposed to make payments for commodities received. The payment is supposed to be passed on from revenue officer to police inspector, then to the police constable and on to the village chief who pays the money to the person from whom the commodities were purchased. However, there is doubt if the poor man from whom the commodities were obtained is really made the full payment or even some part of the money. This must not happen. H.H. wishes that the poor man from whom those commodities were obtained must get a sumptuous compensation and that not even the slightest of harm be done to the poor man

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during the excursions of the H.H.. Therefore, for the supplies of commodities rules are being made as below :

1) Food-grains like wheat, jowar, rice and lentils, flour, sugar, spices and other such commodities should be taken from the *khasgi* department at Kolhapur, sufficient for the staff accompanying the H.H.

2) Prior to departure of the royal party, a worker from the private staff should be sent specifically for the purpose of purchasing things like goats, poultry and eggs. He should make purchases at village markets near the camp on the market days and must immediately pay the vendor in cash on the spot. Arrangements should be made for firewood in advance. Payment for purchase of commodities should be made in presence of a government servant. If he is not available, the payment should be made in front of Patil or Kulkarni of that village as the witness and the receipt should be obtained from the vendor...

3) There should be arrangement to carry buffaloes from the private stable of the H.H. for the outing for provision of milk. If this is not possible, the above-mentioned worker or a clerk from the private staff should purchase milk from vendors from a nearby village and should make the entire payment immediately on the spot as per the prevailing rates of that village. Payment must not be delayed till the time of departure of the H.H.

4) Fodder : There are government pastures in all the blocks. So, there is no need to obtain such commodities. But in exigencies, on the spot and cash payments must be made to the vendors for such purchases...

5) During the tours of the Honorable Political Agent of Karvir and Karnataka provinces, or those from other provinces, or other high-ranking officers under the British Government, the concerned revenue officer or other attending officers, without fail, should take cash from these Honorable officers or their representatives and must make on the spot payment to the vendors, at the market rates of the goods purchased."[5]

Two hundred years ago, the Maratha king from Maharashtra, Shivaji the Great, had issued a similar order addressed to soldiers and officers of his army. That was when they were camping at Chiplun. Excellent arrangements were made for food and fodder required for the camp. But soldiers started wasting things at their will. On knowing this, Shivaji scolded them: "...with great difficulty, clerks have made provisions for the stable from the treasury at different forts. (Unmindful of this) you might demand fodder and grains of the quantity you feel right. You might wastefully feed them till the stocks last. After the stocks get over, you won't get anything in the rainy season. Starvation will make the horses die. That will mean you killed the horses. In such eventualities, soldiers will get hold of *Kunbis* (poor farmers). Some will extract their food-grains. Some others bread, or fodder, or firewood, or vegetables, or lambs. As a result those *Kunbis*, who have managed to make a living will start deserting the place.. Many of them would die of starvation. You will prove to be worse than the Mughal intruders. And will be cursed. You will earn a bad name for bothering the subjects and the horses. Better you know this. Soldiers and others should not harm the subjects in any way. **Money has been provided from the treasury. May it be grains, fodder for cattle, firewood, vegetables and miscellaneous commodities, you ought to**

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purchase them by paying cash if the vendor comes to you to sell them or when you go to the market. There is no need to commit excesses or atrocities, or to engage in brawls with anybody whatsoever. Provisions have been made for the stable and they must be used (economically) till the end of the monsoon."[6]

It is a happy occasion for history students to browse through these two orders issued by two kings to ensure that subjects are protected from harassment by the government staff misusing authority. Indeed, history repeats itself even like this!

Right from the beginning, Shahu carried a conviction that his power as the king was not meant for luxurious self-indulgence. That power was to be used for emancipation of the long persecuted subjects , particularly the destitute and ignorant masses. He rather believed in the concept of royal self-denial. As part of the mandatory administrative training before accession, the tutors had made Shahu to tour all nooks and corners of his State. This gave him a chance to have a close look at the plight of the subjects from villages and remote hilly hamlets. He was sensitive enough to understand and be moved by the miseries of the poverty-stricken masses. That explains why he restlessly roamed his State most of the time rather than wallowing in princely luxuries of the palace; That was why he toiled so indefatigably, interacted continuously with his subjects and shared their anguish. He talked to people from the inaccessible areas stretching from Dajipur-Panhala to Narsobawadi in Shirol Petha and tried to understand their problems. He saw for himself in his journey the poverty of the people, their sufferings, miseries, ignorance and superstition and always thought of measures to improve the situation.

Deeply disturbed by a heart-rending encounter during a tour after his accession, Shahu writes: "I've recently returned after a tour of the district. It gives me immense joy in seeing things myself and talking directly to the people about their problems. On tour, I saw the pilgrim centre of Narsobachi Wadi. Pilgrims from all over visit this shrine. There are many feeding centres for beggars. People believe that lepers are cured here. So these unfortunate patients are found here in large numbers. The problem that is haunting my mind is how to deal with them."[7]

Spurned by the society and objects of contempt as they were, the agonies of wretched lepers profoundly upset Shahu. Soon, during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in 1897, Shahu founded a charitable institution – 'Victoria Leper Asylum'. He personally laid its foundation.[8] The lepers hitherto were required to make a hideous display of their distorted anatomy to beg alms. Shahu had made a sincere effort to make lessen to some extent miseries of their sad life.

An apparently minor episode shows how Shahu's heart beat for the common man and his welfare. Kolhapur was renowned for sugarcane farming and crushing. Often, sugarcane-growers lost arms in the machines while crushing cane. When Shahu saw this, his first thought was "can't we stop this?" He then issued an appeal to the craftsmen in his State: "a big reward shall be given to the person who will design, before January 1st, 1896, a simple, low-cost and easily acceptable sugarcane crushing device in which hand would not be trapped or harmed even if trapped."[9]

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In response, designs and models of cane-crushers with modifications were submitted to the Shahu's Darbar. The best among them was approved; the modified machines were produced in large numbers and dispatched to all the block officers. Then Shahu issued second notification: "with an intention that all the people be able to see the newly -designed crusher, one model each has been sent to *mamledar* and *mahalkari* (revenue officers) of each block. One and all could see it. There is no escape from harm unless people make such suitable modifications to their crushers. Therefore, all the farmers should note this design, see to it that their crushers are improved and the *mamledar* too should persuade the people accordingly... This arrangement has been made for the benefit of public. The Government desires that people should copy the design. The Government will take proper action if this is not done.... -Dated January 28, 1899."[10]

These small things add up to indicate how Shahu, a man of great sensitivity and a will to act, associated himself with woes and miseries of the common man right from the first phase of his tenure(1894-1900). Two devastating calamities struck the State during this period. The awful famine of 1896-97 and the dreadful outbreak of plague. These challenges tested Shahu's mettle as an administrator. He imported food-grains and set up a network of fair price shops, waived off the farmers' cess and arranged fodder for cattle at nominal price as also guaranteed employment to farmers by starting works of digging wells and construction of roads and water tanks. To fight the scourge of plague, he shifted the villages in large numbers and rehabilitated people at safer places. Simultaneously, he unleashed a campaign for the people's scientific education on plague. Shahu left no stone unturned and worked tirelessly to save his people from the scourge and the famine. Mounted on a horse or camel, he moved restlessly from one end of his territory to the other to raise the spirit of the people. He writes to his friend: "I use the palace at Panhala only for sleeping. The rest of the time I'm busy working in my office. I spend mornings supervising the plague relief work in the city. I wanted to see for myself the condition of crops, a few days back. So, I went 40 miles into the interior on horseback. I had taken only one horse for that and I moved at a speed of roughly three miles per hour to see the situation first hand. That has fatigued me a lot. - December 1899."[11]

Shahu's meticulous planning and indefatigable efforts softened the impact of famine and arrested the spread of plague. There was no starvation death in his State while thousands died in neighbouring Bombay Presidency in the ghastly famine. His success owed to the fact that Shahu knew too well that in such calamities the first casualties were the handicapped, the old and the destitute without any support. He set up nine centers in his state to feed and clothe and saved nearly 50,000 lives. He set up crèches to take care of babies of laborers working on construction roads, bridges and tanks.[12] It is heartening to know that even the cries of infants lying unattended under trees and whose mothers had gone to toil on famine works could not escape the notice of this sensitive Prince. The progressive Government of Maharashtra today implements the Employment Guarantee Scheme and provides crèches for babies at EGS works. Shahu had thought of and implemented these schemes more than a century ago. Perhaps, this was the first instance of the

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kind in the country.

FIRST PHASE OF SHAHU'S TENURE

Although Shahu ascended the Kolhapur throne in 1894, there still remained many obstructions in his wielding full power. The problems could have been solved, had his biological father - Abasaheb Ghatge - been alive. But unfortunately, he died at an early age of 30, two years after his son was adopted. There was no worthy supporter left in the royal family except his younger brother- Bapusaheb.

Considering the historical importance of the clan of the Chhatrapatis, Kolhapur should have naturally been at the top of the list of the Maratha states. But the fact was that the status of the Kolhapur State had reached its nadir owing to the tenures of minor kings during the past 50 to 60 years. The British had imposed many treaties to restrict the authority and honor of the Chhatrapatis. The Chhatrapatis were reduced to being titular kings and the real power was wielded by the British and those outsiders hand-picked by them. At the time of accession, the European and Parsi gentlemen had occupied all the key post in the government. For instance State's Executive Engineer was one Mr. Shannon, Court Surgeon Mr. Sinclair; Principal of the Rajaram College Mr. Candy, Lady Superintendent of the education department Ms Little and State Midwife at the Albert Edward Hospital was Sara Sykes, all Europeans. Among the Parsis, Diwan of the State was Mr. Meherjee Taraporewalla and Mr Dorabjee Palanji was the Chief of Police. Brahmins occupied remaining civil posts. They were accustomed to follow dictates from the Political Agent. Now they felt embarrassed to take orders from the Chhatrapati. Shahu raised the matter of this attitude of bureaucrats in the letter he wrote to his Guru Fraser. Giving a piece of advice to his disciple, Fraser wrote back: "you say that the Council and high officers do not obey readily. This was to be expected under the circumstances, but Maharajah, you will save much trouble in the future, if you from the first make every one see that you are the Master. Don't let people presume too much on your good nature."[13]

Hitherto, the British Political Agents considered themselves the supreme bosses of the Kolhapur State. At that time, Hunter the Political Agent, bloated as he was with the imperial superiority complex and hauteur of the representative of the sovereign British power, was upset when the reins went into the hands of the Prince. When he left Kolhapur, he made known his audacious expectation that the new King himself should go to the station to see him off.[14] Unfortunately in 1896, another haughty and whimsical officer by name Colonel William Wray was appointed as Political Agent. His short-temper and high-handedness made him clash with top officers like Principal of Rajaram College Mr. Candy, Court Surgeon Mr. Sinclair, Diwan of the State Mr. Taraporewalla and rattled the administration from one conflict to the other. To top it all, he leveled an accusation that the King himself plotted to poison him at a banquet. Shahu then urged the Bombay Government to send a British inquiry officer and got a thorough probe conducted at the end of which the King's innocence was proved beyond doubt. Wray made an utter fiasco of himself. He was promptly sent packing on an enforced leave. These incidents highlighted what kind of mental harassment Shahu had to face.

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The instances mentioned above are just a tip of the iceberg. These only underlined the fact that the throne of the Chhatrapati was surely not a bed of roses. It is against this dismal backdrop that Shahu established his power as the King in the first six years of his rule by the turn of the century. King Shahu strictly adhered to the advice of his Guru that "...from the first make every one see that you are the Master. Don't let people presume too much on your good nature." With confidence and sure and steady steps, Shahu gradually enhanced the authority and influence of his throne. As a result, the European and Parsi evil stars that had dominated the Kolhapur horoscope faded one after another within four years of his accession. The Parsis Dorabji and Meherji walked away like Candy and Shannon, the Europeans. The King's next strides were made easy, as these stumbling blocks in his way got lost.

Soon after accession, Shahu abolished the 'Council of Regency' and appointed a 'Council of Administration'. It comprised three top officers - the Diwan, Chief Justice and *Sarsubhe*. In the course of time, Shahu appointed the men of his choice to all these posts. With the 'Council of Administration' he created an important department - 'Hujur Office' and appointed his Guru Raosaheb Raghunath Vyankaji Sabnis as its chief (April 1894). Thus was demolished the monopoly of the Europeans and Parsis in the administration. The well-entrenched citadel of the Brahmin monopoly, however, had so far remained untouched. The appointment of Sabnis, a Prabhu by caste, to the post of Diwan was the first salvo fired on this citadel. The second blast came in 1895 with the appointment of Bhaskarrao Jadhav as Assistant Collector in revenue department and the as First Class Magistrate. Bhaskarrao was a bright student from Maratha community, who had passed B.A. and M.A in the first class. An outsider, Shahu had specially invited him to his State. Soon, the king picked up another educated Maratha youth, Dajirao Amrit Vichare, for the post of Executive Engineer, after departure of Shannon.

Thus, from the first phase of his tenure, Shahu started weakening grip of the Brahmins on his administration. Circumstances, however, were not quite favourable. The masses , deprived of education for generations, were just not equipped to steadily supply educated youths needed in the administration. You cannot fetch water in a pail from a dry well. And the question was not just drawing water. There were no wells dug up in the first place. Shahu began digging these metaphoric wells. In the next phase of his tenure he applied himself to the task of creating the basic infrastructure for education of the masses.

Even when he was strengthening his grip of the administration, Shahu took care that the relationship with the British power remained increasingly warm and friendly. As a vassal, he saw numerous advantages in maintaining such relations in the wider interests of the State and his people. Kolhapur State came under the purview of the Governor of Bombay and his Council. It was important for Shahu to win their trust to get things done for his people. He seems to have succeeded in this. Empress Victoria conferred on him the title of GCSI within a year of his accession. In 1895, the most important powers of a ruler- Powers of life and death by which a criminal can be hanged or shown mercy – were returned to Shahu. These powers were taken away by the British in the past from the Chhatrapati. This was an indication that the British rulers

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placed trust in Shahu Chhatrapati. In 1899, Colonel Wray sought to create problems for the King by raising the issue of his alleged poisoning in Kolhapur. But the Bombay Government instituted an impartial inquiry and totally acquitted Shahu of any stigma. The episode and the trial revealed Shahu's magnificent character -honesty, courage and love for justice. Empress Victoria's birthday was celebrated in India on May 24, 1900. To mark this occasion, the Sovereign Government conferred upon the Kolhapur Chhatrapati the title of 'Maharaja'. This was in appreciation of the work and loyalty of Shahu. With efficient governance, he commanded respect for the Kolhapur State in the South. This respect grew so much in the course of time that in the eyes of Indian people Kolhapur became an important state of India in the second decade of the 20th century. We shall deal with this aspect a little later.

Meanwhile in October 1899, in Kolhapur, there exploded an issue which, on the face of it looked so insignificant but carried within it a volcanic potential of triggering a social upheaval. The issue is termed as "*Vedokta*" controversy and we shall explain its meanings and repercussions in a separate chapter. Suffice it to say here that the conflict rocked the entire Maharashtra and out of it Shahu emerged as the protector and the messiah of the *Bahujan samaj, the masses,* and as a social revolutionary of great caliber. But before we discuss this issue and Shahu's contribution we must first ask a few questions. What inspired Shahu to take cudgels on behalf of the oppressed majority and usher in a social revolution? What chemistry went into the making of his personality that made him stake the prestige and power of the Chhatrapati for emancipation of his downtrodden brethren who still were groping in the dark gloom of oppression and social exploitation?

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3.

MAKING OF CHARACTER

What makes men great? How the character and personality of men, who make history, is built? What are the inspirations behind their contributions? Who are their Gurus? History students always dwell over such questions. Each biographer of Shivaji the Great appears to have made sincere effort to probe these queries. It would also be appropriate to analyze here how the personality of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja was developed.

ROYAL REARING

Each person in the society is the product of his or her upbringing. It all begins at home. The parents, the close relations, traditions of the clan, the family's social status and such other things together mould a person's character. Shahu was not fortunate enough to enjoy love and care of his parents for long. A toddler Shahu lost mother at the age of three. Shahu and his brother, Pirajirao alias Bapusaheb, younger by one and a half years, having lost their mother, grew up under the father's stern eyes. Such kids tend to become reticent and introvert, it is said. Shahu too was uncommunicative in childhood. But behind this wall of uncommunicativeness there lay a remarkably healthy and sensitive mind. None else than Shahu's father described him as 'a thinking, obedient, generous and sensitive child.'[1] And his Guru Fraser portrayed him as a child of 'guileless, straightforward, simple, generous, truthful and unselfish' nature.[2]

Shahu's father - Jaysinghrao alias Abasaheb Ghatage - was no ordinary person. He had blood relationship with the clan of Kolhapur Chhatrapati and was a *Jagirdar* of Kagal Sr. besides becoming the Regent of the Kolhapur state in 1882. Abasaheb had had Western education; he was handsome, intelligent, well-informed, and remarkably ambitious man. He impressed even Empress Victoria when he called on her in England. It was owing to his tactics during the lunacy of Shivaji IV that Shahu could come to occupy the throne of Kolhapur. His political skill could be a matter of debate, but history cannot deny the fact that in his son, he gave Kolhapur State the ablest of the rulers.

Progressive by inclination Abasaheb started, in a small place like Kagal, 11 schools for

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boys, one for girls and two English schools. As the Regent, he began a training class for girls under the supervision of lady education officer Ms. Little in Kolhapur and also started girls' schools at Ajra and Panhala (1883). He used to organise exhibitions of the best of the cattle and farm produce at village fairs with an idea to inculcate love for animal husbandry and modern farming into farmers. Wrestling and hunting remained his hobbies, himself being a wrestler. It was Abasaheb's idea to send two wrestlers and one *Wastad* (wrestling Guru) to accompany Shahu when the latter had to stay at Rajkot to complete his education.[3] In short, love for education, wrestling and hunting as also concern for farmers were imbibed on Shahu's mind in childhood by his father. Abasaheb died suddenly of excessive drinking at an early age of 30. It was a cruel blow to 12-year-old Shahu. However, it taught a lesson to Shahu. He never touched alcohol in life. Moreover, he avoided even the shadow of a drunkard.

Who comprised the royal family in the palace when Shahu was a child? There were four widowed queens residing in the royal palace at the time of Shahu's adoption. They were: Queen Taisaheb - widow of Buwasaheb , Queen Ahilyabai - widow of Shivaji III, Queen Sakwarbai - widow of Rajaram and Queen Anandibai - widow of Shivaji IV. Of these queens, Ahilyabai was pious, while Sakwarbai had interest in ruling and administrative affairs. Dominated by these aged widows, functioning of the palace was influenced by old traditions and superstitions. They were very particular that Shahu obeyed the diktats of the religion and caste. Even Fraser, who was appointed to look after the education of young Shahu, was given directives on these lines. Even when they were in deep forests on a hunting mission, the Guru and the disciple would take their food separately under different trees. Fraser avers that not even once did his disciple take tea in his house.[4]

These peculiarities indicate how the palace ambience was governed by the traditional rules and rituals of religion and caste. Later, Shahu himself admitted about his conformist upbringing. In a speech at Nashik he says: " In the beginning, I was a conservative and was extremely proud of the school of old thought. I believed that the rigid caste structure must be kept intact and the system ought to be followed in total. I was not aware that I was obstructing the amelioration of the others with my austerity. I felt that to preside over a meeting organised by people from other castes was defying my own religion."[5] The highlight of King Shahu's life is that he had the guts to break the cocoon of conservatism that his rearing had woven around him.

The greatness of Shahu was that he did not remain for long the prisoner of these orthodox habits and thinking shaped by a regressive caste system. But the influence of the religion lingered on him till the last. Among the queens, Ahilyabai Ranisaheb (Shahu's great grandmother) died in 1895.[6] She was extremely religious. Religious rituals were conducted in the palace all the time which impressed young Shahu considerably. He continued with the religious rituals and poojas as per the palace traditions till his death.

The impact of history on Shahu's upbringing must also be taken note of. Just as the Sisodia clan of Udepur commanded the highest respect among Rajput Princes, so was the stature of the Kolhapur Chhatrapatis among the Maratha Princes.

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Shivaji the Great, the architect of Maharashtra, shaped Maharashtra's history. All his life, Shahu was conscious that he had inherited the legacy of that epoch-making man. He was aware that he occupied the hallowed throne of the great Shivaji himself. Till the end of his life, he took care to ensure that his deeds did not sully the name of the Shivaji the Great.[7]

Shahu Maharaja had a deep faith and pride in Shivaji. That prompted him renovate the temple of Shivaji at Sindhudurg fort and create its replica installed at his Panhala palace. Shahu chose to carry the palanquin of the great king in the traditional Shivaji festival at Sindhudurg![8] Once watching Khareshastri's play, 'Shivsambhav', on the life of Shivaji, he could not control himself and dramatically gate-crashed onto the stage to pay his obeisance to the new-born Shivaji when the scene of his birth was being enacted.[9] Maharashtra had not seen a king like Shahu who respected history so much.

Shahu's was not just an emotional attachment to Shivaji. He believed from the heart in Shivaji's greatness and vision and thought that the latter was not a mere king of his territory in Maharashtra but a true national hero with a longer perspective. However, Shahu knew he lived in a different era when it was not possible to emulate Shivaji's military exploits and establish *'Swaraj'* like the latter. What needed to be emulated in contemporary times were his organisational skills and building the unity of the people. Shahu expressed these views repeatedly in public meetings. He also discovered a bold 'social reformer' in Shivaji. Later in his life when he launched the struggle to destroy the wretched caste system, Shahu often referred to a daring social act of Shivaji. Appealing to the people from his own Maratha caste to destroy the caste system Shahu says, "It is the duty of the high castes to take initiative in the movements of social reforms. The 'Samurai' caste, equivalent of *'Kshatriyas'* (warrior community) in Japan, took the first steps to destroy their caste structure. In the 20th century, we must have before us the social goal set by Shivaji Maharaj himself in the 17th century. The Marathas must not ignore the example set by the great Shivaji when a man from the Nimbalkar clan from Phaltan embraced Islam and married a Muslim woman. Shivaji (disregarding the caste diktats) accepted that man back into the fold of his own caste. Moreover, with the approval of his respected mother Jijabai, Shivaji gave his own daughter in marriage to Nimbalkar's son."[10]

Shahu sincerely felt that an authentic biography of his great ancestor needed to be written. He gave some financial assistance to renowned historian and researcher Parasnis. Unfortunately, the latter could not complete the project. Shahu always regretted it. He wanted *Maharshi* Vitthal Ramji Shinde to write the biography. In a letter, written in 1920, he said: "So far, Tilak earned name for himself hiding behind Ganesh Festival and Shivaji Festival. He started Ganesh Festival to counter Muharram. He used the idea of Shivaji Festival to increase personal stature among non-Brahmins. But none bothered to write Shivaji's biography. Shinde, I feel that you write a good biography of Shivaji and thus render a service to the memory of the great man."[11]

TEACHINGS OF GURUS

The teaching of the two Gurus - Sir Stuart Mitford Fraser and Sir Raghunathrao

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Vyankaji Sabnis - was the another important influence on Shahu. The British Government appointed Fraser as the 'Tutor and Guardian' of Shahu in 1889. Though he relinquished this post in 1894, their relationship of the Guru and the disciple remained unchanged. To get an outstanding Guru like Fraser was a matter of great luck. Fraser was not only a brilliant I.C.S. officer, but he also possessed the heart of a kind father. He always cared for his disciple's well-being and success in life - very much like the ancient sages. He did impart formal coaching in subjects in areas required for the princely students. But more than that, Fraser saw to it that his pupil became an ideal ruler. The contemporary correspondence shows that this Guru worked tirelessly to shape the future ruler's personality with a cultured mind, pragmatism, wisdom, foresight, constant alertness, unflinching loyalty to duty, love for justice, restraint, discipline, tranquility in disasters, generosity and up-to-date knowledge of the world and the country.

Thread ceremony is an important and sacred ritual in Hindu religion to mould a child. Fraser knew the significance of this ritual in the making of a human being. In a sermon-like letter on the occasion of the thread ceremony of his disciple, he writes, "Such an occasion is like a milestone on a road which reminds us how far we have already gone and how far we have yet to go, and you may well stop here a moment, and see how far you have got on the journey of life. No doubt, you do feel consciously older today than you did last week, but all the same you have in fact passed one important "*tappa*" (stage) and have started another stage in the journey. We do not expect you all at once to appear much older, much wiser, and much more serious, for that would be unnatural, but it may be expected that you will now give more thought to serious things, and begin to feel more really the responsibility for your thoughts and actions which distinguishes a child from a boy, and a boy from a man. - 22 March 1891."[12]

Shortly after, Shahu was married. The king was 17 and the queen less than 12. Those were the days when marriages were performed at a very young age. Child marriages created problems in Hindu families. Fraser sincerely wished that such problems should not arise in the royal family; that Shahu's married life be happy and fruitful; that the good health of the young queen be ensured and that their child (heir to the throne) be hale and hearty. He expressed this desire in a letter, in which he discussed this sensitive matter and sought Shahu's promise: "Now, Maharaja, I put this matter to your good sense and good feeling, and am sure that you will realise that what we all wish is for the good and happiness of yourself and your wife; and I want you to give me a promise, on your word of honour as a gentleman, that you will not have access to the young *Rani* till 1894, when she will be of a proper age - 16 Dec 1891.[13] Shahu gave the word Fraser had asked for, behaved with restraint as per the promise and strengthened Fraser's confidence in him.

These two instances show how sincerely and deeply Fraser was involved in building the personality of his charge. Subsequently in life, the King had to pass through the times of joys and sorrows and confront adversities. On all such occssions – allegations of poisoning the British officer, the stormy controversy on *Vedokta'* issue, the King is always seen seeking the Guru's advice and the Guru telling a thing or two of wisdom to his disciple. The dialogue

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between the Guru and the disciple went on for 33 long years uninterrupted and was fit to be a matter of envy to others. Shahu had boundless respect and gratitude for Fraser. He, therefore, praised him as his 'Friend, Philosopher and Guide', and rightly so.

Sir Raghunathrao Sabnis was the other Guru, who influenced King Shahu's life. Shahu's 'native teacher' Krishnaji Gokhale retired in 1893. Sabnis came in. He was Shahu's teacher for about a year before accession. But in this short span, his honesty, truthfulness and sobriety immensely impressed Shahu so much so that he appointed Sabnis as the first *'Hujur Chitnis'* (Secretary to H.H.), when the *'Hujur* Office' was created for the first time after the accession. The graph of his royal service kept ascending. Shahu appointed him as the *Diwan* of the Kolhapur State in 1898. Sabnis remained the *Diwan* during the entire tenure of Shahu and even after that.

Sabnis was brilliant and efficient. He had mastery over English and Sanskrit languages. He had an outstanding commitment to duty and an unflinching loyalty to the master. Fraser and Sabnis were the main advisers of Shahu all his life. But there was a slight difference between the two. Fraser was either at Mysore or Hyderabad. That was not the case of Sabnis. He always accompanied Shahu. He also helped implementing the decisions made on the basis of his advice. He worked shoulder to shoulder with Shahu in fighting out the adversaries. So Shahu believed that Sabnis played a big role in his work and progress. Eulogizing the contribution of Sabnis in 1915, Shahu said: "Honorable Raobahadur Raghunath Vyankoji Sabnis C.I.E. Diwansaheb is related to Kolhapur State for several generations, for long and particularly with me, since my childhood, and my family, closely. All the credit goes to Diwansaheb for whatever good or bad name I have earned. Raobahadur Sabnis is responsible for all the powers I got and for all the benefits the State got during my reign."[14]

Shahu issued one more special order in 1919 praising Sabnis: "The relationship between the present Diwansaheb Raobahadur Sabnis and me is that of the Guru and disciple. He alone is responsible for whatever good or bad name I have earned. Considering the total affection and loyalty he has for me and to the family of my brother, order be issued to the Financial Secretary to make expenditure on him, his servants and guests towards medicines, rent of bungalow and conveyance entirely from the treasury, whenever he leaves Kolhapur – 11 January 1919.[15] In both these orders, Shahu displayed his large-heartedness by public declaration of his close relationship with Sabnis and by giving entire credit of the good work done in his reign to his Guru.

TOURS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Shahu Maharaja came to be known in the first decade of the 20th century as a progressive ruler who loved travelling. Its background was created by his domestic and foreign tours in 1890's. Under the guidance of Guru Fraser, tours were conducted twice in the North and once in the South when he was a student. With discerning eyes, Shahu visited hundreds of historically important sites and structures, pilgrim centers as well as educational and cultural centers, ranging from Peshawar to Tanjavur. These tours taught him the nation's history and the condition of the people in contemporary India. They expanded the precincts and perception of

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his mind and intellect. They increased his grasp of knowledge and power of observation. The tours shaped him into a better being. For instance, the ideal of secularism expressed by Akbar through the structures he erected at Fatehpur Sikri had a far-reaching impact on a 'student' Shahu. In the later life, in his public speeches, Shahu mentioned Akbar respectfully with Shivaji the Great, and described him as a *'Mahatma'* (Great soul).

The visit to Europe in 1902 truly broadened Shahu's vision. He went to England to attend the spectacular coronation of Emperor Edward VII. He visited France and Italy too. The wonderful changes that science brought about in these advanced nations of Europe, modern industries, improvement in farming techniques, huge dams, social organisations, democratic way of life, civil discipline, fierce patriotism of average person and such things immensely impressed him. The extent to which King Shahu was impressed could be gauged by the speech he made in reply to his felicitations organized by the people of Kolhapur on his return home. Shahu says, "I saw a number of public institutions there and had an opportunity to attend public and political meetings around. These things have made me respect and admire British people. Wherever you cast your eyes, you would unfailingly see strict discipline, reasonableness, chaste honesty, love for truth and justice, penchant for doing social work selflessly, extreme perseverance which are the qualities of the British people and were the key to the remarkable success that England has achieved in the world. The visible manifestation of its progress are the imposing edifices of its public buildings, lovely grounds and gardens, the underground railways, grand bridges, gigantic industries, the roaring trains and other vehicles, huge wealth amassed in mammoth museums and the collection of artistic and other astonishing objects from several centuries dedicated to the nation by the charitable organizations founded by gentlemen like Harvard Wilberforce. I cannot express fully in words even a little of those impressions that were made on my mind and the feelings they evoked in me."[16]

The ideas of construction of the large Khasbagh Wrestling Stadium and the Palace Theatre at Kolhapur as also the Radhanagari dam on Bhogawati River must have occured to Shahu during his visit to Europe in 1902. The travels abroad and through India gave Shahu a broad vision while his excursions within his State made him introspect. He combed the length and breadth of his entire State including the inaccessible areas especially before his accession and after it only to discover his subjects reeling under hardship, poverty, debt, ignorance and superstition. The glimpse of the stark reality brought a realisation in him that to rule was not just to maintain the internal law and order, but also to make the destitute subjects happy and content. That is how Shahu emerged as the 'People's King'.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS

It is important to take note of the influence of the work done by four contemporary social organizations - Arya Samaj, Satyashodhak Samaj, Theosophical Society and the American Presbyterian Mission – to understand the personality and the work of Shahu. We shall discuss at appropriate place the work of these organizations. Here, it should be noted that Shahu was attracted to Arya Samaj from

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1902. He said at a public meeting that he was impressed by the values and principles of the Samaj explained to him by Pratapsingh Maharaja of Idar while they met on a ship to England. Later, Shahu came in contact with renowned Arya Samajist Atmaramshastri. What immensely impressed Shahu were the two fundamentals of the Arya Samaj - all Hindus had the right to the Vedas and strong condemnation of casteism and untouchability-. Not too long ago, he had to bear the brunt of the *Vedokta* storm. The Brahmins of Maharashtra had declared him a *'Shudra'* and had denied him the right to the Vedas. It was no surprise therefore that he hailed and embraced the Samaj which deemed all Hindus as equals and gave them the right to the Vedas.

It is a matter of speculation as to when Shahu heard of the Satyashodhak Samaj. It can be safely assumed that he came to know of the movement after appointment of Bhaskarrao Jadhav in the Kolhapur State. Jadhav was brought up in the Satyashodhak ambience under the eyes of colleagues of Mahatma Phule - Ramayya Vyankappa Ayyavaru and Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar. D.A. Surve, who became *Diwan* of the Kolhapur State in the post-Shahu period, has thrown some light on this in his article. He says: "From the beginning of the 20th century, Shahu showed inclination towards social reforms -especially emancipation of the *Harijans*. He discussed the issue with people who knew Jyotiba Phule's work and extracted from them the information on thinking and functioning of Phule as also about the difficulties and disasters that Phule had to face. He arranged frequent meetings of these men with *Diwan* Sabnis in whom he had the supreme faith. Out of these discussions came his conviction that firm and substantial measures must be taken to eradicate social inequality and injustice."[17]

It was logical that Shahu eventually firmly supported and sponsored the activities of the Satyashodhak Samaj which, he believed had waged a fierce war against the atrocious customs like caste discrimination and untouchability. The revival and spread of the Satyashodhak movement to all the nooks and corners of Maharashtra owed much to the patronage of Shahu and his state.

For a while, Shahu, who respected all religions, was also influenced by the Theosophy movement. He organized a session of the Theosophical Society at Kolhapur in 1915 presided by Dr. Annie Beasant, the celebrated spokesperson of the Society. True, the King himself had deep interest in theoretical discussions on spiritualism. But soon he realised that mere debates would not solve the religious or social problems of the common man of Maharashtra. And thus he came out of the influence of Theosophy.

Like Phule, Shahu too was impressed by the dedicated work of Christian missionaries. Since 1903, he came in touch first with Dr. Wanless and then with Dr. Vail - the two American missionary doctors working at Miraj. They did not remain just the family doctors of Shahu but became his close friends. These two doctors refused to entertain the thought of untouchability and discrimination on the basis of religion or caste at the Mission Hospital at Miraj. They believed that service unto the patient was service unto God. Their humane and selfless work highly impressed Shahu. This influence was so strong that in numerous orders he issued for annihilation of untouchability till the end of his life, Shahu asked his officers to emulate Dr. Wanless

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and Dr. Vail in so far as their commitment and devotion to the cause of the untouchables. Have a look at one such regal order: ".....Untouchability shall not be practiced at any of the public buildings, rest houses, government-sponsored feeding centers, rivers and public wells. In Christian public buildings and wells in the American mission, Dr. Vail and Dr. Wanless treat all as equal. The same way touch or contact of any human being shall not be considered as evil. The village *Patil* (chief) and *Talathi* (accountant) shall be held accountable if this order is not followed. Order be gazetted."[18]

The society was shaken to its base whenever such orders were issued. Some conservatives took a delegation to Shahu. They asked him to show the religious basis on which these orders were issued. In his autobiography Dr Wanless tells how he happened to meet Shahu Maharaja in a railway compartment and how the latter told him the story of a delegation. Shahu told the doctor: "....A few days ago a large group of my people came to me demanding that I may inform them as to where and upon whose authority I have issued these new administrative regulations. 'We have been unable ourselves to discover any authority in our *Shastras* (scriptures) for these rules of conduct,' they said. Do you know what I told them in reply? I informed them that I first discovered these rules of behaviour in the American Mission Hospital at Miraj. I have seen them in operation for several years, and I determined that it would be a fine thing for my State if the administration could be conducted upon the same principles."[19] Shahu's statement that 'the very rules of humanity practised at the American Mission form my religious scriptures', underlines the extent to which he was impressed by the thought of compassion of the missionaries.

WHO WAS SHAHU'S REAL GURU?

Thus, the work, principles and philosophy of many individuals and organisations from the contemporary society had influenced Shahu and shaped his personality. Many factors ranging from the Scottish Mission at Pune to Thomas Paine's 'Rights of Man' created the social reformer in Mahatma Phule. In the same fashion, the wide spectrum from the Miraj American Mission to the 'Writings & Speeches' by Ingersauls gave birth to the social reformer in Shahu.[20] Yet we cannot say that one particular component was the most effective or more inspiring and others were less significant. Also, it would not be right to invent the Gurus of these supermen and then imprint them on their foreheads. The questions - who is the Guru of Mahatma Phule? Or who is the Guru of Shahu? - are meaningless. We believe that great men have no Gurus. The apparent walking of the Gurus into their lives is a matter of sheer coincidence. Basically, right from the beginning, there exists a spring of compassion in the heart of the great men. As the time passes, this spring grows into a big river and that river expands into a huge ocean. This is a beautiful, natural process. And the self-inspired powerhouse that vigorously burns within these great men forever sparks off this process.

Despite this, if someone wants to search for Rajarshi Shahu's Guru, he could be very well guided by the words uttered by Shahu himself on one occasion. He said: "My real Gurus are the ancestors' history and my own experience.[21] In Shahu's view, the 'ancestors' history does not imply the battles fought by the ancestors or their valor. On the contrary, it implies blunders committed by ancestors and the evil customs they created allowing the ruin of

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the society. And 'my own experience' means the experience the King himself had of the evil customs and of the blunders of the ancestors, in general. About the 'ancestors' history Shahu had to say this: "let's have a look at the past history of India for a while. There is a sea change between today's India and the India of a thousand years back. Today noble qualities like valor, erudition, religiosity and generosity are extinct. We have come to such a stage that we are completely indifferent even if the Indian nation is in the tight grip of thousands of evil customs and distorted values. The wicked customs like child marriages, polygamy, liquor consumption, ban on women's education, chaotic caste structure have reduced this society to a living corpse."

"Take for instance the *chaturvarnya* structure. In India, particularly in the southern states in Maharashtra, the conditions of non-Brahmin castes are deplorable. No opportunity is given to these castes to inch forward and to make progress. Today, in the 20th century, there are humans who are considered untouchables!. Their only crime is they were not born in particular castes. At no place in India today we come across unity, love and co-operation. The reason for this state is our own stupidity. In India, there exist some human beings whom even the shadow of some human brothers is unbearable. These people consider themselves as high caste and are intoxicated with the hollow pride of their caste and they commit excesses at will on the so-called low castes."[22]

What was that 'experience' of evil customs which Shahu referred to? Shahu himself told Barrister Shamrao Kelavkar of an incident. Kelavkar was the son of the first Indian lady education officer of Kolhapur State-Rakhmabai Kelavkar. He recalls: "....Once during a discussion, Maharaja said, 'Kelavkar, I honestly feel that I should tour the entire State, should visit each village and should take food in each of the ghettoes of Mahars .'

'Your Highness, but why do you feel so?'

'It so happened, Kelavkar, once I went to Satara. Food was being cooked for us. It was a Brahmin-style cuisine since the cooks were Brahmins. It was high time to take food. So I took bath and entered the kitchen to see for myself how things stood. The stuff was boiling in many vessels.

" 'There was a pretty good distance between two vessels. One bare-chested Brahmin held a cat in his arms and was strolling between two vessels. He saw me and yelled, 'you can't wander like this here. There will be havoc if you touch something. These words pierced through my heart. And I kept asking myself - Is my status lower than that of the cat?'

" 'I am the King. And yet I have to take these insults. What must be happening to the lot of the untouchable castes? Therefore, I feel irresistibly that I must dine with the lowest of the low people.'"[23]

Such personal experiences taught Shahu quite a few lessons and guided him on his path. Even seemingly insignificant experiences can teach you in a fraction of a second what you cannot possibly learn reading dozens of volumes on social atrocities and slavery. That explains why Shahu made his personal experiences his great Guru. These chiseled his personality. It acquired better and better shape step by step. The Shahu of 1894, who issued the charter of people's welfare; the Shahu of 1902 who reserved 50 per cent posts in

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administration for backward castes; the Shahu of 1908 who set up a special hostel for the untouchables; the Shahu of 1911 who extended the State sponsorship to the 'Satyashodhak Samaj'; the Shahu of 1918 who issued the notification for eradication of untouchability and the Shahu of 1920-22 who gave leadership to the vast majority and the have-nots from the whole of Maharashtra – It was the same Shahu, the individual and yet at each stage his personality had changed for the better. This is an evolutionary development and it lends richness to his personality. *Maharshi* V.R. Shinde probing the wealth of Shahu's mind says: "If we look at Shahu's life scientifically and sympathetically, we find first that his mind was continuously evolving and second that it tended to bloom into a progressive mind."[24]

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4.

THE *VEDOKTA* STORM

It was the month of October in 1899. As was the custom, Shahu Maharaja along with a few family members went to the banks of Panchaganga river for taking holy bath in the Hindu month of Kartik. Those who accompanied him included his brother Bapusaheb and brother-in-law Mamasaheb Khanvilkar, friend Rajaramshastri Bhagwat, a few others and the priest Narayan Bhatji, who was appointed to chant the *mantras* when the holy bath-was on. The priest chanted *mantras* as the King took bath. Rajaramshastri, a great Sanskrit scholar himself, noticed that the priest was chanting *mantras* from the *puranas* instead of the *Vedas*, and that too without having himself purified with a bath. Rajaramshastri first brought to Shahu's notice that the hymns being chanted were from *puranas*, (a practice for the lowly castes) though the Chhatrapati being a *kshatriya* had the right to *Veda* hymns. Shastri then questioned the erring priest who retorted, "The *purana* hymns alone need to be chanted for *shudras*. The priest was required to take bath only when *Veda* hymns were to be chanted. For these Shudras only the hymns from *puranas* were enough. So there was no need for me to take bath!"[1] These foul words of the priest hit Shahu like a thunderbolt.

SPARK OF VEDOKTA : A TURNING POINT

To the King, who carried the title *Kshatriyakulawatans Hindupadpatshah* (The Hindu Emperor and the ornament of the Kshatriya race), it was beyond imagination and tolerance to hear such a disparaging language from a two-penny priest. It was not his wild imagination; it was a harsh reality that confronted Shahu. Such genuine self-realization made him look inward and think deeply. It was this realization that prompted him to raise the flag of social rebellion.

Earlier, Mahatma Jotirao Phule had a similar experience. Once when Phule walked in the marriage procession of his Brahmin friend, a hardliner Brahmin yelled at him: "You *kunbi* brat! Don't ever dare brush shoulders with us Brahmins. You're a Shudra by caste and still walk by the side of us Brahmins? Doesn't your foul touch blight us? Walk behind us and keep good distance !'[2] The foul tongue of that Brahmin hurt Phule's soul. But it also made him think and rebel.

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One more great soul had passed through a similar agonising experience. Gandhi was boarding a train at a railway station in South Africa. With the first class ticket in hand, he was trying to get into the first class compartment. But the haughty Whites obstructed him saying: "You're black. You can't sit in the Whites' compartment." Rightfully and persistently Gandhi tried to get into the train. The Whites showered choicest abuses and heartlessly threw him with his luggage out on the platform. Mahatma Gandhi had far worse experience than Mahatma Phule and Rajarshi Shahu had. It was not only the Whites' foul tongue but also the Whites themselves who had pounced upon him.

The priest on the bank of river Panchaganga, the conservative Brahmin from the marriage procession in Pune and the Whites at the South African railway station were the chips off the same block. They were human creatures belonging to the same class. They arrogantly carried the myth from generation to generation that in the whole world they were the superior human beings and that all others were inferior creatures. It was this very sting, which stirred and brought forth the 'Mahatma' in them. True, the painful stings of countless scorpions made the three insulted men restless. But more than that their heads reeled with violent commotion of thoughts. The state of mind of Rajarshi Shahu after returning to his palace from the Panchaganga banks, that of Phule on returning home after the marriage procession and that of Gandhi retired in the waiting room at the railway station, was one and the same. The central theme of the storm was – whether to take this insult lying down or to rise in rebellion. It was not an insult of a Shahu, a Phule, or a Gandhi, but the insult of humanity, one more assault on the low class masses whom the so called upper class people had been trampling for centuries. In their personal insults these great men saw enormous social injustice of the situation and made spadework for the onslaught. History reveals that instances of such insults, in reality, proved to be the 'glorious moments', the turning points in the lives of many great souls.

THEORY OF BRAHMIN SUPREMACY

The right to perform the sixteen rites as also other rituals from the Hindu religion amid chanting of the Vedic hymns is the *Vedokt*a right. In the ancient times, the three *Varnas* - the *Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas*-had this right. However, in course of time, with the intention to establish their complete supremacy, the Brahmins pushed the the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas* down into the *Shudra Varna* saying that these two *Varnas* had become extinct and that in the whole world only two *Varnas* had remained – the Brahmin and the *Shudra*. Even so, a Brahmin has to make a living. The religious rituals of the *Shudras* who now constituted the overwhelming majority, must go on. Thus the latter day 'lowly' *puranic* cants became the *Shudra* lot to emphasize their iinferior status while the classic *Veda hymns* were reserved for the Brahmins.

Who made these decisions? The Brahmins, of course! Brahmins pronounced themselves as the best and the purest class of human species on planet earth. Thus their ultimate superiority has been the favorite plank of the Brahmins which they foisted on the society all the time from Manu to Ramdas. Appropriate religious scriptures, *Smritis*, and *Puranas* were manufactured to support this maxim which

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took the notion of Brahmin superiority to a ridiculous extreme. *Manusmriti* is one such book touted by Brahmins as 'the pillar of our culture, conduct and social practices' and which controlled for centuries the life of Hindus in this and, it is claimed, in the other world too.[3] Manu has clearly stated :

"Be it the fire ritually generated and purified in a sacred *agnikund* (copper bowls Brahmins used to worship fire with vedic hymns) or generated by any ordinary method, fire remains the great Goddess. Similarly, be he an erudite or non-erudite, a Brahmin remains a divine God.!"[4]

Scholars claim that *Manusmriti* is over 2500 years old.[5] All religious leaders who followed Manu successfullly foisted Manu's dictates on the society. In the 17th century, Samarth Ramdas harped on what Manu had said earlier. Ramdas says:

"Even if inactive I Guru to all is Brahmin I
Surrender to him alone I With complete devotion
The Lord manifested ! For the sake of Brahmin I
None other than Vishnu I Proudly carried on chest
listen O, mortals ! The footprint of Brahmin I
The Vedas ordain I All shall worship Brahmin
Disregard the Vedas I And bring God's displeasure
Rituals, sacraments, penance, oblations I fruitless sans Brahmin
Brahmin at holy places I offerings for Brahmin
Nothing fruitions I Without blessings of Brahmin
Epitome of Vedas, Brahmin I the Lord Almighty, Brahmin
All desires are fulfilled I With blessings of Brahmin
To purify soul worship Brahmin I Path to God through Brahmin
Creatures attain Moksha ! By drinking holy water through Brahmin
Great Gods bow before Brahmin I What of worthless humans
Even a Brahmin stupid I Is revered by the World
A Shudra scholar I What use he is
Can never be worshipped I Like twice-born is[6]

This, according to Ramdas, explains the greatness of Brahmin *varna*! It makes one speechless to offer any comment on this monumental audacity. Ramdas is not content making Brahmin the guru of the world. Brahmin is no less than God Almighty. And it is not binding on the Brahmin to be knowledgeable or of high moral character. It is absolutely all right even if he is "brainless'. Despite this, the great Gods bow before him. Then what is the worth of insignificant human creatures! No less a God than Lord Vishnu took great pride in carrying as the *Sreevatsa*, the footprint of sage Bhrigu, a Brahmin, on his breast after the sage had kicked him on the chest. Ordinary humans just do not count !

To consolidate their supremacy further, the Brahmins propogated this theory : In the contemporary *Kali Yug* (age of evils) *Kshatriya Varna* has become extinct and that the *Kshatriyas* have metamorphosed into *Shudras*. In support of this, they fabricated stories in *Puranas* like Parshurama making complete genocides of *Kshatriyas* repeatedly 21 times to wipe them out from the face of the earth. They manufactured phrases like *"Nandantam Kshatriya Kulam!'* (After the

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King Nanda, Kshatriya race was no more). Brahmin scholars from the Mughal era like Krishna Narasimha Shesh and Kamlakar Bhatt wrote books on the specifics of the *Shudra* behavior to lend respect to such phrases. The Brahmin superiority complex and ego were so bloated that they were oblivious of having distanced from logic while manufacturing such stories. When Parashurama killed all the *kshatriyas* and wiped out the race, why was he required to do the genocide again and again 21 times? What stupid contradiction! And even after complete annihilation of Kshatriyas (21 times), how come Lord Rama and Bheeshmacharya, *Kshatriyas* themselves, defeated Parshurama in subsequent battles as the same *Puranas* narrate? All right, after King Nanda, the Kshatriya clans became extinct. But then, who were the Guptas, Chalukays, Parmars, Yadavs and the Rajputs in the North, who ruled for long periods? However, who could ask these logical and simple questions to Brahmins? For Brahmins claimed till the end of the 19th century that all the keys to the treasure of knowledge were in their custody and the ignorant *Shudras* had no alternative than to keep nodding in approval !

Thus, Brahmins overwhelmed *Kshatriyas* by their stories of so-called Brahmin supremacy and threw them into the *Shudra Varna*. The *Vaishyas* met the same fate. Brahmins had already pushed the entire womanhood (including Brahmin women) down into the *Shudra Varna*. Many religious academics from Manu onwards had branded woman as *Shudra*. But Brahmin scholars never cared to think how a son born of a *Shudra* woman could be a Brahmin ! Their next dictate was that the *Shudra* men and women had no right to the *Vedas*. They put a social restriction that *Shudras* should perform their rituals accompanied by Puranic hymns alone. The social outlook of Brahmins had emanated from such ridiculous notions of racial supremacy for the past 2500 years. It must be borne in mind that it was this very mindset that the Maharashtrian Brahmins who denied Chhatrapati Shahu the right to *Vedokta' mantras* had inherited.

THREE *VEDOKTA* EPISODES

The Marathas from Maharashtra considered themselves Kshatriyas. But the Maharashtrian Brahmins considered them *Shudras* denying them right to the Vedas. Conflict between these two important castes was inevitable as they held diametrically opposite views. Brahmins had challenged the Kshatriyahood of the Marathas on three important occasions before the *Vedokta* episode of Kolhapur. The first instance related to the coronation of Shivaji at Fort Raigad in 1674. Brahmins raised doubts over Shivaji's Kshatriyahood. They were countered with a great skill. Evidence in black and white was produced that Shivaji's Bhosale clan had its roots in the clan of the Sisodias from Udaipur. Also, Gagabhatta, a powerful leader of high caste Brahmins of Hindustan, was invited from the holy town of Kashi. Gagabhatta, whose origins were in Maharashtra, had on the strength of his knowledge, won the sobriquet of "second Vyasa" (vedic sage) in the 17th century. A great statesman as he was, Shivaji declared his Kshatriyahood through Gagabhatta and silenced the wagging tongues of the Maharashtrian Brahmins. Gagabhatta performed the coronation and rituals amid chanting of Vedic *mantras*. The *Vedokta* storm atop Raigad fort simmered down.

The second instance concerns Chhatrapati Pratapsingh Maharaja of

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Satara. Brahmins were back at their old, favourite game. They raised doubts over the Kshatriyahood of the Bhosale clan of the Chhatrapatis. Chintamanrao Patwardhan of Sangli huddled with a few orthodox Brahmins and issued a religious edict through a high Hindu priest, the Shankaracharya of Sankeshwar , that King Shivaji was not at all a Kshatriya as there were no Kshatriyas in the Kali Yug; therefore, Pratapsingh was not entitled to hold the title of *Kshatriya Kulawantans.*[7] Pratapsingh called a meeting of both parties to settle the issue publicly. *Kayastha Prabhu* scholars fought the case of the *Kshatriyas*. The Brahmins were defeated. Existence of *Kshatriyas* was upheld and the *Kshatriyahood* of not only the Bhosales but also of the Marathas like Ghatages, Palkars, Jadhavs, Shirkes, and Mohites etc. was proved. Their right to *Vedokta* was accepted - (1835). Pratapsingh failed to turn this controversy into a wider social issue. Shortly after this, the British deposed him.

It was in the court of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda in 1896 that the *Vedokta* issue stirred a controversy for the third time. The Maharashtrian Brahmin priests on his staff refused to perform the rituals for the King with Vedic hymns. Sayajirao sacked them, recruited new Gujarati and Rajasthani priests and ensured continuance of palace rituals in *Vedokta* manner. An angry Tilak fired the first salvo from Pune in his paper *Kesari*. Sayajirao refused to take cognisance. He knew the social dimensions of the *Vedokta* issue and had initiated certain reforms in this regard. But he did not aggravate the controversy further. Like a good administrator, he just solved the issue by making alternate arrangements and drew curtains.

VEDOKTA FLARE-UP

But Kolhapur witnessed what Baroda did not. The *Vedokta* spark flared into a furious social conflagration which in turn metamorphosed into a movement for social justice. It could as well have been a storm in a teacup if the Kolhapur Brahmins were to show some good sense and broad-mindedness. They could have done well in reminding themselves that the times had changed, that they were not living in the era of Shivaji the Great, or not even in the era of Chhatrapati Pratapsingh Maharaja. They failed to realize a simple fact that they not only bruised self-respect of Maharashtra but also offended Marathi culture and history when they attacked the dignity of the Chhatrapati by calling him a *Shudra*. Even if they realized it, their arrogance stemming from racial superiority complex had overshadowed their conscience. They kept repeating blindly the blunders made by their ancestors.

Chhatrapati Shahu was 25- year young and proud king when on the banks of Panchaganga river a Brahmin in his service contemptuously dismissed him as a *shudra*. It hurt Shahu immensely. And yet he kept his cool and did not allow this humiliation lose his balance. However, the account of the episode on the river bank spread around causing a great surge of fury among the Marathas of Kolhapur. The local Brahmin leaders ought to have shown some sensibility to settle the matters. But the opposite happened. Some leaders of Brahmins like Prof. Vishnu Govind Vijapurkar, an ardent supporter of the cause of national freedom and national education, instead of restraining Brahmins indulged in aggressive activities that flared a confrontation with Marathas. As a result the *Vedokta* issue erupted in a big social

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controversy. The Brahmins, instead of apologising for insulting the Chhatrapati, expended their cleverness in fabricating 'evidence' to show that the Chhatrapatis did not belong to *Kshatriya varna*. Moreover, they argued how it was unjust and improper in the changing times on part of the Chhatrapatis to insist on the right to the Vedas. The Kolhapur Court had been giving grant to Prof. Vijapurkar's monthly publication - *Granthamala'* for seven years. The grant was discontinued in 1901. Vijapurkar lost temper and decency in launching scathing attacks against the Marathas and the Chhatrapati.

Around this time, Tilak visited Kolhapur in August 1901 in connection with the 'Tai Maharaj case'. The Kolhapur Brahmins had organized a felicitation and meetings with him. It is evident that the raging controversy must have been discussed in these meetings. What exactly transpired in these meetings and what advice Tilak gave to the local Brahmins is not known. The history is silent over this. But one can get a clue if one recalls the open criticism by Tilak on the *Vedokta* episode of Baroda and then the public posture he took over Kolhapur *Vedokta'* controversy. However, a letter that the Governor of Bombay wrote to London throws some light over Tilak's role in this case. The Governor says :"...this *Vedokta'* issue would have disappeared into thin air without any disturbance. However, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, during his Kolhapur visit in connection with Baba Maharaj adoption case, intervened in the affair, induced the anti-Shahu Brahmin activists and deepened the crisis. Because of this, it became a matter of prestige for both the Brahmins and the Marathas. Otherwise, this problem would have remained within the bounds of Kolhapur."[8]

Maharashtra by now had begun perceiving Tilak as the leader of the conservatives and a 'protector of religion'. His harsh criticism of 'Consent bill', his manipulation in pushing out the *Samajik Parishad* from the Congress forum and his obstructionist views on social reforms had created this image. Against this background Tilak's partisan support to orthodox hardliner Brahmins of Kolhapur was understandable in this context. The 'Tai maharaj case' actually fuelled the *Vedokta* into a raging storm and obliged Tilak to launch vicious attacks on the Chhatrapati on behalf of the entire Brahmin orthodoxy of Maharashtra. In that litigation, Shahu had taken a position opposed to Tilak which further aggravated the issue. Many sporadic conflicts erupted during the *Vedokta'* controversy in Kolhapur; Narayanshastri Sevekari, the outspoken Brahmin priest who performed *Vedokta* rituals for Marathas during the holy month of *Shravan*, was ostracized by Brahmins; Brahmins refusal to perform the last rites at the time of lighting the funeral pyre for Shahu's foster-mother Anandibai Ranisaheb with *Vedokta'* mantras and their contemptuous utterance - "Who'll perform *Vedokta'* rites for this Shudra woman?'; fire in the Old Palace of the Chhatrapati on that same night..... These were a few instances. The most shocking one was when the chief priest of the Kolhapur Court Appasaheb Rajopadhye refused to perform routine religious rituals of the Palace with *Vedokta* mantras. Rajopadhye's decision taken under the pressure of Brahmins proved to be not only suicidal but also added fuel to the conflagration. While the blaze was raging furiously over *Vedokta*, the Shankaracharya of the Karveer Peeth Brahmanalkar Swami also stood against the Chhatrapati and challenged his Kshatriyahood.

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Shahu was obliged to take action. Repeated warnings fell on deaf ears of Rajopadhye. Finally, Shahu confiscated the priest's property yielding an income of Rs. 30,000 per annum for rendering religious services for the Royal Family. Shahu also dealt a blow to Brahmanalkar Swami by confiscating the annual income of Rs. 50,000 of Shankaracharya's *Matha*. Hundreds of Brahmins who had refused to fall in line were punished with confiscation of their grants and Inams. A notification was issued to reserve 50 per cent of jobs in the state's administration for the backwards classes. These actions of Shahu enraged the entire Brahmin community of Maharashtra. *Vedokta* issue now became a fierce battlefield. Brahmins from Pune, Wai and Belgaum rushed to the rescue of Kolhapur Brahmins. Brahmin newspapers started spitting venom again Shahu. In this melee, the guardian and leader of the orthodoxy was none other than Tilak.

TILAK'S STANCE ON *VEDOKTA*

What were Tilak's views on the *Vedokta* issue? In October 1901, he wrote in *Kesari* two editorials titled as "Foolhardiness over Vedokta", in which his views were made clear. His main points were as follows :

1) *Vedokta'* was foolhardiness entered into the heads of Marathas who had acquired 'culture' through English education.

2) All renowned scholars of *Dharmashastra* hold the opinion that genuine Kshatriya and Vaishya castes are extinct.

3) Shivaji the Great had accomplished the great task of ensuring survival of the Hindu religion and the Hindu Nation. A grateful Maharashtra considered in what way he could be accorded a high post, high honor, and high authority and under the supervision and advice of Gagabhatta, with the approval of statesmen and brave men from all the castes, moreover, with the collective will of the whole of Maharashtra, he was coroneted in classic Vedic manner.

4) At that time people had faith in the Bhosale clan. Therefore, they were willingly ready to give 'all or a little more than all the facilities plausible as per the practice and the dictates of the Scriptures' to the man who protected the Hindu religion. The Marathas today do not command that right.'

5) Although this Coronation was conducted in a classic manner appropriate for a Kshatriya accompanied with chanting of Vedic hymns, there is no evidence that the Bhosale clan were allowed *Vedokta* rituals. On the contrary even at that time, the P*uranokta* system was prescribed for the household rituals of the Bhosales. 'Some frivolous Marathas' of the present-day are defying the decision made in Shivaji's lifetime and have foolishly whipped up the *Vedokta* debate.

6) To insist on *Vedokta* right by those Marathas whose clan is lower in achievements, caste status and respect than that of the Bhosales, is not in accordance with justice and caste traditions.

7) The notion that Vedokta rites will make Marathas and Brahmins belong to one caste has no foundation. Let it be remembered that Brahmin women remain Brahmin even if they have no right to *Vedokta* mantras and Marathas will remain Marathas even if they start chanting the *Vedokta'* mantras.

8) The king's authority cannot be abused for disturbing the peace and stability of the society and if a Prince of a State abuses

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authority in this manner, the Sovereign Government will be obliged to take notice. It is the duty of the British Government to ensure that conflicts between different castes in a State do not reach flashpoint owing to encouragement by the Chief of that state.[9]

Though Tilak is circumspect in expressing his views on the issue, his stand on 'Vedokta' can be clearly deduced thus: In the present era, Brahmin and Shudra were the only two Varnas. Shivaji the Great too was a Shudra. However, the important people (means Brahmins) of contemporary Maharashtra were pleased with his work and as an exception they made a special favour to Shivaji by conferring Kshatriyahood upon him and allowing his coronation in *Vedokta* style at Gagabhatta's hands. However, at that time, the Brahmins had ruled and set that Bhosales had the right to only *Puranic* hymns for religious rituals and that tradition continued in the Bhosale family. That tradition alone shall be followed. Barring the Chhatrapati clan, other Marathas are not Kshatriya. Therefore, they do not have the right to *Vedokta*.

There is no evidence to what Tilak says about the so-called tradition of *Puranokta* rituals set for the Bhosale clan. It is an outright wretched logic to argue that the Bhosales had a tradition of *Puranokta* rituals just because there is no evidence that they were performed in the *Vedokta*' style. On the contrary, the *Vedokta* rituals were very much held in the house of the Chhatrapati till 1860 when they were substituted by *Puranokta* style in the lifetime of Babasaheb Chhatrapati. None else than Prof. Vijapurkar, who was a vociferous colleague of Tilak during the *Vedokta* storm, has affirmed this.[10] Fact is that the Brahmins 'intimidated' the Chhatrapatis and replaced the *Vedokta* with the *Puranokta*. Also, the records show that a scheming Nana Phadnawis had cleverly managed to discontinue the *Vedokta* rituals practised in the family of Satara Chhatrapatis.[11] This clearly shows that the *Vedokta* tradition was maintained for pretty long time in the house of the Bhosales after the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji the Great. Brahmins broke it cunningly.

Tilak hurt the dignity and self-respect of the whole Maratha community by proclaiming that no Maratha clans other than Chhatrapati Bhosales had the right to *Vedokta*. These included Shahu's brother Bapusaheb Ghatage of Kagal and Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda. Shahu was upset. That is why Shahu, who began by asserting *Vedokta* rights for his royal family, expanded his sweep by demanding the right for the entire Maratha community. To him it was social injustice to acknowledge only the Bhosales as Kshatriya and brand the rest of the Maratha community as Shudras. Tilak's statement No. 7 above was aimed at avoiding the main issue and diverting the debate. The Marathas insisted on *Vedokta* not because they wanted to become Brahmins. They wanted those rights as Kshatriya. In statement No. 8, Tilak has issued a threat that the Sovereign Government would be compelled to act, in the eventuality of misuse of power by Shahu.

Earlier, Tilak had defined a Hindu as the one who has faith in the Vedas. It is amazing that the same Tilak was quick to deny the Marathas the right to Vedic hymns. The followers of Christianity, Islam or any other religion in the world are never banned from reading holy books of their religion. On the contrary, it is their perpetual effort to bring followers of other religions to read their holy books and

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embrace their religion if they liked the philosophy. It is with this idea that they translated the Bible into all languages of the world and reached it to all nooks and corners of the globe. Hindus are the only exception. Brahmins, who were the custodians of the Hindu religion, monopolized the right to the greatest religious book of the Hindus, the Vedas ; it was unfortunate that Tilak was the leader of this orthodoxy.

Many research scholars of this period say that the seeds of Brahmin-Non-Brahmin conflict that dominated public life of Maharashtra for many decades, were sown in this period and that this controversy would not have assumed such ugly proportions if Tilak were to show a little broad mindedness and follow a softer line. Even so, it should be noted that Tilak's controversial stand on *Vedokta* issue was in consonance with his posture in his public life in the decade of the 1890s. His stand was against the demands of social justice. But then, in reality, he had begun to emerge as a conservative leader who was opposed to social reformists like Ranade and Agarkar. This image of his had obviously chained him down. Not only the social history but also the political history of the next forty years of Maharashtra would have looked different had he broken those shackles and accepted with open mind the Kshatriyahood of the Marathas. He certainly had that strength. But he was also well aware that such a revolutionary posture would not gather support of the Maharashtrian Brahmins. Also, this politically conscious class of Brahmins had unreservedly backed his political stir. That class was his strength in his nationwide agitation. The conclusion is inevitable: Tilak was not willing to sacrifice the support of this class for the social issue of *Vedokta*.

CONTROVERSY ENDS

It is interesting to see how the *Vedokta* chapter ended in Kolhapur. When his property was confiscated by the State, Rajopadhye rushed for help to the Sovereign Power. He kept appealing to all the authorities- from the Political Agent at Kolhapur to Governor General in Calcutta. Attention of Kolhapur and the whole of Maharashtra was focused on this case. Much of the future of Vedokta depended on it. Finally, in 1905, the Governor General dismissed Rajopadhye's appeal. It was a big jolt to the Brahmins warring over the *Vedokta* and their side was greatly weakened. Tilak's *Kesari* appeared aggrieved as much as Rajopadhye and his chief advisor Vijapurkar. *Kesari* threw curses : people would feel happy if the Kolhapur State merges with the British Empire, just as Rajopadhye's property was merged with Kolhapur treasury.

Rajopadhye's case was the last hope of the Brahmins. They lost it and their spirits plumetted steeply. At the end of the melee, Brahmins came to terms with the reality that Shahu had emerged victorious. The first man to come crawling to Shahu was the Shankaracharya of Karveer Math - Brahmanalkar Swami. He apologized and admitted that Shahu was a Kshatriya and that he had the right to the *Vedokta*. Shahu pardoned the Swami and returned his property in September 1905. Kolhapur Brahmins followed suit by acknowledging Shahu's Kshatriyahood and his right to *Vedokta'* by passing a resolution at a public meeting in December 1905. At long last, Shahu won the social war of seven years. It was a great victory in the social history of not only Maharashtra but also of India. However, the Brahmin community as a whole was reluctant to accept Shahu's

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triumph. The *Vedokta'* issue was raised off and on casually. But it had lost the old vigour. The *Vedokta* was reduced to the intellectual pastime of orthodox Brahmin scholars like Bhaushastri Lele of Wai and *Itihasacharya* V.K.Rajwade of Pune.

The stalwarts, who fought for the Brahmin lobby in this conflict, besides Tilak and Vijapurkar, included Ghorpade from Ichalkaranji, Advocate Rashingkar (Kolhapur), editor of 'Vidyavilas' Shankarshastri Gokhale, Dadasaheb Karandikar (Satara), editor of 'Dharma' Bhaushastri Lele (Wai), Mahadeo Rajaram Bodas (Mumbai), editor of 'Kal' Shivrampant Paranjape (Pune), V. K. Rajwade, S. V. Ketkar, Sardar Balasaheb Natu etc. They were assisted by ceaseless tirades from Brahmin newspapers like *Kesari, Samarath, Kal, Modvritta, Gurakhi, Dharma, Jagathitechchhu Prekshak, Subodhsindhu, Belgaum Samachar and Brahmodaya* etc.[12]

It must also be noted that a few Brahmin thinkers, men of principle and social commitment, firmly backed Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja in this war. They included: Vedic scholar Narayan Shastri Sevekari, who braved the punishment of his ostracism by the Kolhapur Brahmins; Tatyarao Joshirao, who was later appointed as the chief priest in place of Rajopadhye; Brahmins of some status in Kolhapur Gundopant Pishawikar and Dattatreya Tophkhane, Balasaheb Patwardhan from Kurundwad, Mahadevshastri Divekar from Wai, Bombay's reformist thinker Rajaramshastri Bhagwat and celebrated scholar *Bharatacharya* C. V. Vaidya of Pune. Rajarshi Shahu's camp received substantial moral support and strength as Brahmin scholars, particularly Rajaramshastri Bhagwat and *Bharatacharya* Vaidya, publicly produced the evidence and argued the logic of the Kshatriyahood of the Marathas and the legitimacy of their right to the Vedas.

VEDOKTA SIGNIFICANCE

Although the *Vedokta* chapter ended on a note of surrender by the Karveer Shankaracharya and the Brahmins in general, its echoes kept reverberating for a long time on Maharashtra's social front. The controversy was restricted to the palace of the Chhatrapati initially, but in course of time it expanded into a major social conflict because the issue ultimately dealt with the fundamental tenets of social justice. It was not as if that the Maratha caste would suddenly flourish by performing religious rituals amid Vedic chants. Tilak and Vijapurkar raised this point time and again in their writings while denying the *Vedokta* rights to Marathas. Tilak said , "We know that Brahmins with *Vedokta* right work as lowly servants while Puranokta Marathas enjoy kingly status. Therefore, isn't it wrong that the Marathas should insist on Vedic rights?"[13] Vijapurkar also said, ".....In the changing times, the educated Brahmins are rejecting these rituals as redundant. To embrace again the same empty rituals and start chanting Vedic mantras like a mass drill without understanding a word is nothing but a waste of time and money. What would the Marathas gain by getting themselves bogged down under the heavy plough of the *Vedokta* rituals when educated Brahmins are already discarding it with disdain?"[14]

But then, why did the Brahmins oppose so much *Vedokta* rights to the Marathas if these rights were outdated, meaningless and burdensome plough that Lokmanya Tilak and other thinkers felt? By voluntarily accepting the burden, it was the Marathas

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and not Brahmins who would suffer. Moreover, Brahmins would make more money by levying higher *dakshina* (fees) for chanting Vedic mantras. The Brahmins' advice, of course, betrayed their conceit. Even Shahu knew too well that *Vedokta* rights were not going to make Marathas great. But the issue was not as shallow as chanting of ancient hymns. It encompassed a wider social milieu and social rights. Marathas wanted to reassert their right to *Vedokta* as Kashatriya bestowed on them by the *chaturvarnya* system of Hindu religion, a right denied to them by religious monopolists who had proclaimed extinction of the Kashatriya class and pushed Maratha community into the lowly *shudra varna*. It was a struggle to restore the dignity and self-respect of a people. Denial of the right was manifestation of the Brahmin complex of morbid racial superiority against all non-Brahmins and a sinister design to consolidate their all-pervading religious and social monopoly. To allow the Marathas their *Vedokta* right would mean acknowledging their Kshatriya status, which according to chaturvarnya blue-print, was equal or occasionally superior to the status of the Brahmin *varna*. Marathas would brush shoulders with Brahmins with almost equal status in religious as well as social affairs. Brahmins were not willing to yield. The Maratha agitation had a broader perspective of establishing social right and winning social justice.

Vedokta episode marked the first phase of Chhatrapati Shahu's life which went through evolutionary phases before he was acknowledged as a progressive king and earned popular title of 'people's King'. On the face of it, it looked a struggle for narrow ends. But it must be acknowledged that Shahu was obliged to work within the bounds of chaturvarnya system which had an iron grip over the Hindu society. At that stage in life, he had not rejected the system of the four Varnas. Only after 1910 did Shahu expand his horizons to wage wars against the concepts of caste supremacy, discrimination on caste basis and against the evil of untouchability. In fact, it was after 1915-16 that the next phase of his progressive public life evolved. It would be wrong to apply the yardstick of this next phase to his actions and thinking in 1901-02 when Shahu may not have fully imagined that a decade later, he would champion the cause of all the non-Brahmin communities, *Dalits* and other downtrodden. His public life evolved and enriched gradually, like a bud slowly blooming into a fragrant flower. In the *Vedokta* phase of Shahu's life, the bud was about to start blooming.

Even so, it was not a small thing to successfully challenge the Brahmin social supremacy and monopoly. The struggle gave Shahu an insight of the character of the wretched Brahmindom and earned him some techniques to fight it out. This 'self-realisation' and the new technique guided him through his life. The new experience also made him turn to the Arya Samaj which opened the doors of *Vedas* to all the Hindus; it also attracted him towards the Satyashodhak Samaj, which was at war with Brahmin monopoly. This was the most significant outcome of the *Vedokta* episode.

Rajarshi Shahu's contemporary Bhagwantrao Palekar, editor of the periodical *Jagruti* feels that the *Vedokta* storm not only jolted the Maratha community from slumber, but also marked the beginning of a new era of awakening of the vast majority of the entire non-Brahmin class. Palekar says, "it would not be wrong

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to say that the Kolhapur *Vedokta* episode was the first clarion call for a dynamic movement of the backward castes for social and political emancipation. There could be differences of opinion on the character of *Vedokta* movement and yet it cannot be denied that it aroused the self-respect of the non-Brahmins and turned their attention to religious reforms. Chhatrapati Shahu's patronage of this movement lent it weight and facilitated its spread."[15]

Prof. Annasaheb Latthe, the first biographer of Chhatrapati Shahu, feels that the King's victory in the *Vedokta* struggle infused a new dynamic spirit among the non-Brahmins and it was, indeed, the beginning of the historic non-Brahmin movement of Maharashtra. Prof. Latthe says, "Chhatrapati's victory ended the general indifference of the Maratha community over the *Vedokta'* issue and it came to life with a new vitality and verve. A wave of enthusiasm swept over hostel students, and all non-Brahmins youths and people of Kolhapur. New centers of non-Brahmin awakening automatically emerged wherever these people went out of the Kolhapur State. Through these centers was fostered the non-Brahmin movement within a few years."[16]

In short, the *Vedokta'* struggle metamorphosed Shahu Chhatrapati into a rebellious social reformer and a future leader of all the non-Brahmins.

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5.

SHIVAJI CLUB AND MILITANTS

Even when the *Vedokta* conflict was on, Shahu faced one more challenge that was more intricate and long-lasting. It was posed by the militant activities of Brahmin extremists; members of the 'Shivaji Club' formed in 1893 in Kolhapur had come into action. This Club originally established to impart training in manly sports and pursuits to the youth of Kolhapur and to promote public celebration of *Ganeshotsav* and *Shivjayanti* festivals, had gradually turned into a militant outfit. Its activities were directed against the sovereign British Government. Shahu, as the head of a vassal state of the British Paramount Power had to take cognizance of these activities and take due measures to suppress this militancy. As a result, this organization had become hostile towards him.

RISE OF SHIVAJI CLUB

To begin with, Shivaji Club had many non-Brahmin members though it was started by educated young Brahmins of Kolhapur. Near and dear relatives of many a high-ranking officials of the Kolhapur Darbar too were involved in this organization. Shahu himself was sympathetic towards this Club as it undertook constructive and patriotic activities to cherish the memories of legendary Chhatrapati Shivaji the Great. The Darbar even assisted its members by providing them horses and armaments to promote manly sports. Meanwhile in August 1895, a delegation led by Lokmanya Tilak had called on Shahu regarding rejuvenation of dilapidated *Samadhi* of Shivaji on fort Raigad. Shahu had readily assured this delegation of profuse assistance out of his feeling of deep respect towards his ancestors. As such, it was natural for him to support all such constructive activities that were undertaken in the name of Shivaji the Great. Even the British officers were not against this movement in the beginning.

But this ambience did not last long. The Shivaji movement pioneered by Tilak acquired political overtones. That was natural though. However, as a result the State gradually became hostile towards this movement. In Kolhapur, some members of the Shivaji Club started collection of arms and ammunition. The police had booked some members who were punished. This incident had alerted Shahu. However, activities of the Club continued

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unabashed. They participated in the revolt of Beed in April 1899 and assisted the revolutionaries economically. In addition, they also committed robberies in those houses in Kolhapur that were closed during the outbreak of Plague (January 1900). These robberies were committed to raise money required to purchase arms. Some participants were caught and sentenced. During this very period Colonel Wray, the Political Agent of the British Government in Kolhapur, accused Shahu of having attempted to poison him. Some wicked elements in Kolhapur, in order to poison British Government's attitude towards Shahu, started spreading rumors that Bapusaheb, Shahu's younger brother, was the mastermind behind the illegal and inflammatory activities of the Shivaji Club. As a result, the British Government developed certain reservations about Shahu's intentions. These were also the heydays of *Vedokta* conflict. Most members of the Shivaji Club were Brahmins, the class instrumental in flaring up the *Vedokta* issue. All these facts compelled Shahu, to issue a royal order stating that no officers of the Darbar or their relatives should keep any connection with Shivaji Club. In accordance with this order, almost all non-Brahmin members severed their ties with the Club and from 1900 onwards, Shivaji Club came to the fore as a group prominently of Brahmin extremists.

LOKMANYA'S STAND

It is important to note the attitude of Lokmanya Tilak towards these militants. At this juncture, he was being hailed as the pioneer of the radical political ideology within the Indian National Congress. The reign of autocratic Lord Curzon and his oppressive imperial policies were at peak. To resist the tyrannical rule of Curzon many an armed secret group had mushroomed all over the country, especially in Maharashtra with Pune, Nahik, Satara, Kolhapur, Belgaum being the hub of their activities. Members of these groups were devout followers of Tilak though he never supported militants openly even if he was always sympathetic towards them and at times helped them materially. However, he took due care not to be involved legally or otherwise in providing them with such assistance, which of course was essential for the furtherance of 'service to the motherland', the task he had undertaken. Nevertheless, his *Kesari*, denounced the activities of terrorists as inhuman acts of mad men on the one hand and on the other, vehemently asserted that oppressive and tyrannical imperial policies of the British were primarily responsible for such madness by unarmed Indians.

Tilak always stood behind armed revolutionaries as he believed that their daring activities were a natural expression of popular discontent simmering in society against the British. According to the great revolutionary Veer Savarkar, Tilak was the hilt of the same sword of which armed revolutionaries were the blade.[1] This does not mean that all militant activities were undertaken on his advice. But he stood by them and if need be, provided assistance by all possible means direct or indirect and also warned them to be more realistic and vigilant.

In the state of Kolhapur, Tilak continued to support the Brahmin extremists in the same way as he had supported the Brahmin caucus during the *Vedokta* conflict. In the month of June in 1907, Shahu issued a royal order banning public meetings to check militants' activities. Deploring this move in his mouthpiece *Kesari*, Tilak wrote,

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"Though public meetings are banned without prior permission of district magistrates in Punjab and East Bengal provinces, a Chhatrapati from the dynasty of the great Shivaji following suit and issuing orders on similar lines of the tyrant British Government is abhorrent. What such plans are designed in the state of Kolhapur or what such conspiracies are hatched against the King that cannot be overcome without imitating odious British laws and policies? Only events will decide if Maharaja is our foe or we are his enemy".[2]

ACTIVITIES OF MILITANTS IN KOLHAPUR

The activities of the militants in Kolhapur continued through the *Vedokta* episode. These activities intensified immediately after the Brahmins were finally defeated on this issue. As the head of the state, it was the duty of Shahu to check these activities by all possible means. In performance of this duty, it was inevitable to seek the British assistance as well as to assist the British in this respect. There was a significant difference between the militants in Kolhapur and militants elsewhere in the country. The militants of Kolhapur operated in the backdrop of *Vedokta* conflict. As such, their militancy was tinged with the hue of religious intolerance. This intolerant attitude was adopted by the Brahmins against Shahu himself. The relations between Shahu and the Brahmins had become enemical and hence the Brahmins started exploring other means of putting the King into trouble.

Character assassination was one such means. In the middle of 1906, some vicious elements in Kolhapur sent applications to the Bombay Government, either unsigned, or signed in fictitious names. In these applications, they had accused that Shahu had violated modesty of three young women in Kolhapur. Shahu accepted this challenge in a very noble way. The attempts at Shahu's character assassination will be discussed later in details. For the time being, suffice it to note that in the ongoing confrontation between the Brahmins and the Chhatrapati, the Brahmins stooped down to any dirty level. It should also be noted that Tilak never supported such filthy acts.

In the course of struggle that was going on between Shahu and Brahmin extremists, the latter even tried to eliminate the Chhatrapati. Rather it appears that elimination of Shahu became a major goal of extremists thenceforth. On 21st March 1908, Akkasaheb Maharaj, the daughter of Shahu, was to tie marital knot. A grand ceremony full of grandeur and pomp was organized to celebrate the wedding. Sir George Clarke, the Governor of Bombay and his many British associates, Political Agent Ferris, the Maharajas of Bhavnagar, Mudhol and such other States were to remain present for this occasion. Militants like Damu Joshi, Ganpatrao Modak etc. planned to bomb these dignitaries on this day. Fortunately, the bomb to be brought from Pune could not reach Kolhapur in time and the tragedy was averted. These reckless militants did not even bother to think of the repercussions the Brahmins of Kolhapur would face had the bomb reached Kolhapur in time blasting the newly wedded couple along with the Chhatrapati and the Governor.

Colonel Ferris along with Shahu was on the hit list of terrorists. Ferris had become their staunch enemy as he had helped Shahu in the *Vedokta* conflict. They planned

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to kill him in a train on his way back after retirement. On April 16, 1908, Damu Joshi shot at him in the railway compartment. Fortunately for Ferris and unfortunately for Damu, the pistol did not fire and Ferris was saved.

Just within three months, an unsuccessful attempt to blast Shahu himself was made. In a letter about this attempt to one of his well-wishers Sir Claude Hill, Shahu writes, "These days terrorist activities are at its peak in Kolhapur. Hatred that Brahmins have for me has reached its pinnacle. After confirming my return to Kolhapur from Pune by mail, they had placed a bomb on the road from railway station to the palace. However, I had to take the next train, as I had been to meet one ailing relative. In Kolhapur, the road closed for traffic according to custom was reopened when I did not arrive as scheduled. The bomb exploded while a horse carriage went along injuring the horse. I was saved by a stroke of luck. I have received some threatening letters from Bombay. They have threatened to blast me within one month for having insulted Mr. Tilak's *Jagatguru*. Even the British Government cannot save me, they have boasted. I feel extremely sorry to tell you that Kolhapur has become a center of terrorists. Out of the fifteen States that comprise Southern Maratha States, Maratha kings rule only two namely Kolhapur and Mudhol. The rest are Brahmin States. Naturally, in this region known as Southern Maratha Country, the Brahmins have a domineering presence." (18 july 1908).[3]

Many more conspiracies were hatched to eliminate the Chhatrapati in the days that followed. Informing about one such conspiracy his teacher Fraser writes, "Your conjecture regarding people bent on killing you has unfortunately come true. The traces of this conspiracy have been uncovered. The Bombay Government has arranged for your protection.- (5 April 1910)"[4] It appears that terrorist tracked Shahu until the end of his life. One letter written by Mr. Bhalchandra Shekdhar of Pune, a well-wisher of Shahu, is available. He writes,

"The reason to write this letter to Huzur (Your Highness) is that I have heard some people wishing to harm Huzur's person. From the conversation I heard it appears that, they will try to imppresil the life of Huzur by throwing some (explosive) substance at Huzur. There is also a possibility of Huzur being poisoned through water. After having noticed me they threatened to kill me if I leak their conversation. However, as I am a loyal subject of Huzur and my family is doing well out of Huzur's grace, it is my duty to inform Huzur about this conversation which I have performed."[5] There were many well-wishers in society alert to protect the Chhatrapati just as his enemies were on the prowl to finish him. For them his life was valuable as is clear from the letter above.

In Southern Maharashtra, Kolhapur was the only Maratha State. Many others like Sangli, Ichalkaranji, Aundh, Bhor etc were the Brahmin States. The militants had spared these Brahmin States and made Kolhapur as the second most important centre of their operations after Pune. This, Shahu was convinced, was a crooked ploy of the Brahmin class as a whole. The militants could continue their struggle with the British and put Shahu into trouble at the same time. This means that the militants in Kolhapur were trying to kill two birds with one stone. They looked upon Shahu

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as their enemy in the same league as the British. They hated him the same way they hated the foreign masters. However, the hatred for Shahu had originated from the sense of superciliousness and superiority complex of the Brahminical class. One cannot find such Brahminical conceit in the deeds of other great men like Savarkar. Their militant activities were based solely on their love for their motherland.

SHAHU HELPS REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS

Shahu certainly yearned for political freedom of the country and had due respect for freedom fighters like Lokmanya Tilak. However, he could not express openly his sentiments about Indian independence or nationalist leaders as he was tied under obligations as a vassal of the British Government. He could never feel hatred for those great revolutionaries who gave their lives for freedom of their motherland. Rather at the bottom of his heart, he had sympathy and love for freedom fighters. A few references reveal this fact.

First reference relates to the episode of guns from Nepal. Between 1902 and 1904, one of Tilak's aids Kakasaheb Khadilkar was trying to set up a factory with the help of German technicians to manufacture guns in Nepal. Tilak was the inspiration behind this adventure and he along with some associates like Vasukaka Joshi, Khaparde etc. had taken the responsibility of raising funds of thousands of rupees required to accomplish this, of course, in great secrecy. There is evidence to the effect that Shahu had covertly sent an amount of Rs. 5000 to this 'gun fund' of Tilak as his contribution. This fact has been vouched by Gopalrao Palsule, one of the organizers of Shivaji Club in Kolhapur.[7] Corroborating this evidence Jayvantrao, the grandson of Tilak, in an address given on birth centenary of Shahu in 1974, has said that this amount was sent through the Rajesaheb of Miraj.[8]

The second instance relates to the aid sent to Babu Arvind Ghosh. After Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki exploded a bomb in Muzhaffarpur on April 30, 1908. The British Government in an attempt to finish off the revolutionaries in India, seized Arvind Ghosh, the leader of Bengali revolutionaries, and detained him at a police station like an ordinary criminal. His sister made a public appeal to raise funds for his release. Shahu felt extremely sorry to see a great revolutionary like Arvinda in trouble and secretly sent an amount of Rs. 5000 through Captain Madhavrao, brother of one of his good friends Khaserao Jadhav of Baroda as his contribution to this fund. V. D. Tophkhane one of the close associates of Shahu has asserted in his autobiography that Shahu himself had told him of this fact.[9]

One of the cohorts of Tilak and Shahu's staunch opponent Mr. N. C. Kelkar has clearly stated that Maharaja Sayajirao and Shahu Maharaja "both had helped the revolutionaries whenever possible."[10]

One more reference is available in an interview-cum-article in *Kesari* by one Ganpatrao Jambotkar, a Tilak devotee from Belgaum and an activist in the armed struggle. He writes, "Lokmanya Tilak, in order to facilitate the impending armed struggle for independence, between 1903 and 1908 had organized a secret society, which he operated astutely. Shahu Maharaja used to send an amount of Rs. 500 to this society every year."[11]

K. G. Suryavanshi, a biographer of Shahu, on the evidence of the office of

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Raobahadur Vichare has asserted, "Shahu Maharaja used to send big amounts to Tilak through his confidant officer Dajirao Amrutrao Vichare."[12]

Now some scholars may raise a question whether any documentary evidence corroborating Shahu's help to the revolutionary movement is available. The only answer to this question is that for such assistance being provided under utmost secrecy, any documentation about the same was impossible. Keeping any documentary proof of such assistance would amount to self-destruction as well as destruction of the cause. Not only Shahu but also Tilak always took utmost care that not a single concrete evidence of his assistance to the revolutionaries fell in government hands. Renowned research scholar Prof. Y. D. Phadke, while narrating the incident of Rand's murder informs of Tilak's assistance of Chaphekar brothers in arranging for their shelter at various places. He has gathered this information from various autobiographies and biographies published after independence. On the basis of this information Phadke says in conclusion, ".....According to the information gathered after independence Tilak knew about the assassins of Rand and Ayerest and it can be inferred that Tilak had arranged for the shelter of Chaphekar brothers who had assassinated the white officers."[13]

Now if one applies the same yardstick to Shahu's life a new dimension of his work comes to light that speaks volumes about his love for the freedom of the country. Shahu who used to send bountiful assistance wishing success to the armed struggle of men like Lokmanya Tilak, Babu Arvind etc. is also seen trying hard to bring to book the militants in his state. Here he appears to have categorized militants definitively. The militants of Kolhapur drunk with the notion of Brahminical superiority and baying for his blood were his avowed enemies. Shahu rightly felt that eliminating such hostile elements and bringing peace and order to the state was his primary duty as the head of the state. However, he did not confuse these militants' activities with the armed struggle of great revolutionaries at the national level. To assist these revolutionaries who espoused the path of armed struggle for the noble cause of independence, he believed, was his national duty as a son of Mother India. His secret assistance to the likes of Lokmanya Tilak and Babu Arvind cannot be interpreted in any other way but this.

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6.

SHAHU AND LOKMANYA

In the first two decades of 20th century Maharashtra was blessed with the leadership of two great men - Rajarshi Shahu and Lokmanya Tilak. Shahu led Maharashtra on the social front whereas Tilak was at the vanguard of the political movement of not only Maharashtra but also entire India. One, consideried political freedom secondary and pressed more for social freedom that would ultimately lead to human emancipation while the other considered social reforms secondary and political freedom as more important and immediate objective. In fact, social and political freedoms are complimentary to each other and each of these great men knew it very well. Under such circumstances, there should have been perfect coordination between the two distinct movements in Maharashtra to achieve the two afore mentioned freedoms. These two leaders should have strived hand in hand. Unfortunately for Mharashtra, this was not to happen.

MUTUAL FEELINGS: EARLY PHASE

In reality, Tilak had utmost respect for the Kolhapur seat of the Chhatrapati. It was out of this feeling that Tilak and Agarkar, had publicly fought through *Kesari* the atrocities perpetrated on Chhatrapati Shivaji IV which caused Diwan Barve's displeasure against them. The issue ultimately culminated into judicial punishment for the duo. In this very affair, Abasaheb Ghatge had provided handsome monetary assistance to Tilak-Agarkar's Deccan Education Society and the Society's honorary chair was offered to the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. Later, Tilak heartily congratulated Shahu on his accession to the throne and still leater, Shahu had accorded due welcome at his Darbar to the delegation led by Tilak canvassing for restoration of *Shivsamadhi*. In gist, until the year 1900 at least, Shahu and Tilak shared a cordial relationship.

The depth of warmth or trust that existed in this relationship becomes clear from a reminiscence that Shahu himself once narrated to his friend Tophkhane. Shahu says, "I was tormented day and night by a painful thought that the British Government looked upon our Kolhapur State as a state that could be confiscated anytime at will as if it were a gateway of a temple that childern build out of mud on the day of *Pandavpanchami* and

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break it the next day. This was how theyhad eliminated Rajaram Chhatrapati in Italy on his way to India. Shivaji IV was put to an extremely brutal death using the most loathsome of means as he had a strong sense of self-respect and would never stoop before anyone. This Government had similar plans for me, which it had begun to work out. They wanted to frame me under the charge of attempted murder by poisoning. Had their plans come true, they could easily have killed me confining in some solitary dungeon and confiscated the State of Kolhapur declaring the royal family of Kolhapur as unfit to rule. I wanted to discuss all these things with Tilak. However, he was getting more and more drenched in the deep waters of politics day by day. I was worried as to how do I meet him. I was extremely careful not to let anything fall in the clutches of the British Government that would destroy me. Despite this, I had managed to send Tilak a verbal message. However, the messenger came with a reply that I should communicate in writing. I did not believe in it. I withdrew from that communication thinking that the mediators were playing foul."[1] That Shahu had thought of Tilak as a savior who would guide him out of as huge a calamity as the charge of attempting to poison becomes clear from the above account. However, he could not contact Tilak because he was not sure about the intentions of the mediators.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Soon after when the *Vedokta* issue erupted, Shahu thought this time too that Tilak would side with him and find a solution. Shahu says, "Later on, conflict over the *Vedokta* issue began. The murmur that the royal family of Kolhapur is of Shudra origin and does not belong to the Kshatriya caste had become the talk of the town, I gathered. I felt that Tilak would definitely find some solution on our behalf. I was confident about him that he will not be indifferent. However, I never heard him fighting for my cause. Rather the news in the air was that Tilak had sided with the Brahmins. My mind had become restless. I was totally confused..."

"The *Vedokta* issue could have been avoided from getting the morbid turn it later did and everything could be settled amicably if only Tilak had participated in this conflict the way I had expected him to. Besides, Tilak's participation would benefit me in that I could have discussed with an open mind all such other problematic issues in details with him and that too without any chance of an iota of doubt for the British Government. Tilak did not act in the manner he should have and that was his mistake. Here he went wrong. We will not claim that we never committed mistakes. Such claim would not stand. However, if Tilak were to act otherwise issues could have been settled with everybody's consent in a manner we desired and the disruption and disharmony that later on disturbed the society could be averted. The desire that we both had nourished of working together would not be lost in the air. Then began a spree of raking up the foibles of each other."[2]

Almost every scholar who has worked on the *Vedokta* issue has observed in the same vein as Shahu that Tilak committed a mistake in upholding the orthodoxy against the former on the *Vedokta* issue. Nobody can refute this reality. However, it is obvious that the unrelenting stand that Tilak took later by openly accepting the leadership of the Brahmin coterie of Kolhapur was largely a fallout of the stance

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that Shahu had taken against Tilak by personally getting involved in the Tai-Maharaj episode. After that, many issues such as the activities of Brahmin extremists in Kolhapur, Chirole affair, the matter of Kulkarni Watan cropped up in a row. Both sides attacked and counter attacked each other. This war-like situation continued throughout the life of the two leaders. The correspondence of Shahu with the British Government and his British officer friends relating to the case of Tai-Maharaj, extremists and Chirole, might betray him to scholars as an avowed enemy of Tilak relentlessly pressing to finish him off with a vengeance. Their opposition to each other intensified by the day since the occurrence of *Vedokta* controversy. Shahu appears to have opposed his overwhelming opponent in an equally forceful manner. Even granting that Shahu may have been pressurized by the British Government to oppose Tilak in the Tai-Maharaj case and Chirole episode, his vehemence in doing so seems disproportionate and out of order. However, to love or to hate to the extremes was a distinguishing characteristic of his personality. He loved from the bottom of his heart and opposed as if his life were at stake. The manner in which he showered his love on *dalits* (depressed classes) is a glaring example of his no holds bar style of bestowing love and affection. He also hated his opponents to the extreme. And therefore, he always referred to Lokmanya Tilak not merely as an adversary but as an 'enemy'.[3]

Tilak and his associates too showed little restraint in opposing Shahu. Their opposition grew in intensity especially after the year 1918 when Shahu entered politics of Maharashtra assuming the leadership of the Non-Brahmin party. Tilak's *Kesari*, with its tremendous power to influence public opinion in Maharashtra, was a powerful weapon at his service. To counter the attacks of *Kesari* and other Brahminical newspapers, Shahu encouraged starting of many a Non-Brahminical newspaper. He helped these ventures in every possible way. As a result, the Brahmin Non-Brahmin dispute in Maharashtra reached its apogee. And in tandem the feeling of hostility between Tilak and Shahu touched the zenith. It grew in intensity loosing all restraint. In the year 1918, after being refused permission to discuss the political issue of Home Rule, Tilak staged a walk out from the War Council convened by the Governor. Criticising Tilak's action, Shahu in a letter to British officer Cadel writes, "A man such as him would have been straight away shot in Germany."[4]

Tilak too showed no less vigor in expressing his feelings of anger. A few days before his death, around May-June in the year 1920, the antagonism between the two leaders had reached its peak. Tilak had threatened Shahu through Topkhane who had come to meet him on fort Sinhgad thus- "If Shahu does not change his twin policies of appeasing Europeans and creating a feeling of animosity between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins by instigating Non-Brahmins to demand improvement in their right and status, he will meet the same fate as Rand and Jackson."[5]

MUTUAL WARMTH

Although such instances of outburst of sentiments of anger occurred seldom, these should be considered as indicative of the extent of bitterness between them. Even if it were so, Tilak, somewhere deep in his heart had a feeling of respect and trust for Shahu and Shahu too felt special affection for Tilak deep in his heart. History offers a few instances to this effect though not

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many. One is as follows: "After Tilak's release from Mandalay the Bombay Government was showing much curiosity about his work *Geetarahasya* (a commentary on *Shrimadbhagwadgita*, the holy book of the Hindus) he had written in prison. The Government assigned the task of getting the manuscript of Geetarahasya to Shahu who called on Tilak at Gaikwadwada and asked for the manuscript for about a week or two in order to read it. Tilak instantly handed four big volumes over to Shahu which he took and left. On Tilak's return to the drawing room the assemblage gathered there said in amazement, 'What have you done this, sir? Will you now ever get that manuscript back? The crocodile has swallowed the ruby! No, No! You committed a grave mistake Sir!' They were distressed. But Tilak was calm. Putting a piece of bettlenut in his mouth he said, 'The Chhatrapati himself had come in person asking for the book. Refusing to give the book would tantamount to insulting the throne of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. That I would never do. There might be differences of opinion between the Chhatrapati and me. But I adore him. His words are reverent to me.'

"That is all right. But now *Geetarahasya* is gone,' someone said in frustration.

"Where would it go? Even if the books are gone, the content is in my mind. I will write it down again word-by-word. Besides, Shahu Maharaja has assured me he will return the books in a couple of weeks. This is Chhatrapati's word. He will definitely abide by it, I am sure,' Tilak said.

Eventually Tilak was proved right. Chhatrapati handed the books over to the governor, took them back within the said period, and returned to Tilak.[6]

As regards Shahu, his economic assistance to Tilak's mission on various occasions has been discussed earlier. Among those who helped in the conveyance of funds or secret messages, one was Sardar Balasaheb Gaikwad, adviser of Shahu from his intimate circle. Renowned litterateur G. T. Madkholkar says, "Even during the period when their antagonism was bitterest, Shahu tried to assist or alert Tilak secretly in his own way. Balasaheb Gaikwad was Maharaja's reliable mediator in this task"[7]

There is one exemplary reminiscence by *Prabhodhankar* alias Keshavrao Thackeray that speaks about the clandestine manner in which Shahu helped Tilak. Shahu's deep involvement in the Chirole episode against Tilak is common knowledge. He was eager to help the British Government in every possible manner in this matter. He had solicited Professor Dongre to translate Chirole's book 'Indian Unrest' into Marathi and then published it. The Bombay Government was totally supportive of Chirole. The Government, through two secret letters, had requested Shahu to covertly provide Chirole with all documents and information from any government department he needed. The letters were sent under the signature of Robertson, Secretary to Bombay Government. When the proceedings finally began in the court of law, in the course of its business, Robertson was summonsed once to depose before the court. During his cross-examination, Tilak's attorney Dadasaheb Karandikar kept repeatedly asking him whether the Bombay Government had sent such secret letters or not and Robertson kept ardently answering as 'No, No, not at all!' Finally, when Karandikar took out those two letters (ditto copies of the original) from his files and

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submitted before the court, Robertson was extremely embarrassed. Bombay Government's bias towards Chirole was proved and Tilak's case strengthened. The letters, safe and sound in Shahu's vigilant custody found their way to Tilak through an emissary of Shahu himself. Later on, when Thackeray asked Shahu about this incident he said with vehemence, "So what? Are we supposed to put Tilak into trouble by withholding those letters? He is dying for the country. Are we to continue our *Vedokta* enmity in politics too? Disputes should have limits."[8]

After Tilak's release from Mandalay, the Bombay Government in 1914 had issued a circular warning the elite of the society such as the *Jagirdars*, the *Watandars*, the *Rao-Sahibs*, the *Rao-Bahadurs* etc. that if "any person related with the Government meets with Tilak, it would be considered an offense and punished accordingly". Interestingly, such circulars were issued also by heads of all the Princely States including that of Kolhapur under pressure from the Bombay Government.[9] In the light of this, it is clear that Shahu was taking a considerable risk helping Tilak clandestinely.

A couple of instances in Shahu-Tilak relations are extremely touchy. In July 1920 when Shahu came to know that Tilak was stationed in Bombay and his health was deteriorating, he immediately wrote a letter to Tilaks's son Shridharpant thus: ""I felt extremely sad to hear that Lokmanya is not keeping well. Keep informing about his well-being by wire everyday. I think he should stay in warm climate. He should shift to my bunglow in Miraj. There he could avail the services of expert doctors such as Dr. Vail and Dr. Wanless. I feel that would improve his health. I have sent Tophkhane, Vichare and Ponkshe to you. What else do I write..?"[10]

If one considers that the above letter is written (in June-July 1920) when the antagonism between the two was bitterest and Tilak had sent a message to Shahu warning him of a similar fate as Rand and Jackson, one cannot help being surprised. Topkhane, Shahu's confidant, was also astonished. He writes in his autobiography, ".....but as I knew of the rivalry between the two, I could not resist myself from asking, 'Your Highness and Lokmanya share a relationship of utmost enmity. And how do Your Highness propose to arrange his stay at Panhala? How can this be true?' For his answer, Rajarshi cited the example of the battle between Prithviraj and one of his uncles. He narrated to me in succulent words how Prithviraj on coming to know that his uncle was lying on deathbed with mortal wounds went to meet him in the evening clad in a simple shirt made of muslin and fulfilled his death wish of having food in the same plate. Then Rajarshi said, 'We are born in the land of Bharat that has a tradition of this type of enmity and in the Aryan religion, which is a noble religion of the world. We know how much importance to enmity should be attached. What would happen if I were ailing in place of Tilak? Would he not come to wish me good health and would he not arrange for my well-being? Is that what you want to say? If someone were to say so, that is absolutely false, baseless is what I would yell from the guts even in my illness. I know Tilak's greatness, Topkhane."[11]

The news of Tilak's sad demise arrived while Shahu's messengers were on their way to Tilak. He was camping at Raibaug and was shocked to hear the news. Madhavrao Bagal reminiscences,

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"Maharaja received the telegram of Lokmanya's demise from Kolhapur at 8 a.m. at the Raibaug camp. He shut his eyes tight on receiving the wire. Tears began to flow as he opened his eyes. After this initial burst of emotions, he exclaimed, ""My great foe has gone.With whom do I fight now? Even if I were at loggerheads with him, his service to the nation was enormous"!

"Arrangements were already made at Raibaug camp for a cheetah hunt; a bait of a deer was in place, horses had left for planned locations and the King was ready in hunter's outfit to leave in the hunting car along with a cheetah. The game was abandoned, horses called back. Meat was prohibited in the meals that day. Even the cheetahs were fed with milk. The King spent the whole day warmly talking of Tilak, eulogizing him. There was no other topic."[12]

AN UNSOLVABLE PUZZLE

In view of this warmth of Shahu towards Tilak, no wonder that many scholars feel that the relationship between the two was like an unsolvable puzzle. *Prabhodhankar* Thackeray who had several meetings with Shahu writes, "What kind of chemistry worked between these two great men of Maharashtra is still a puzzle. Those with a narrow outlook viewing Tilak and Shahu in terms of Brahmin and non-Brahmin Maratha have not found an answer and will never find one. Neither have let out this secret to their closest confidants. Those who probed Shahu on this mystery received only evasive but interesting sermons from him."[13]

Looking in retrospect at this puzzling phenomenon, it becomes fairly evident that the two had taken unyielding adversarial positions on public issues concerning the social life of Maharashtra and this opposition was in no way personal but based on their respective ideologies. At times, though this opposition grew intense turning into "enmity', the fine cord of respect and affection that existed in their hearts for each other remained intact. The 'affection' and 'enmity' between them were real. There was no pretense in either. Speaking of Shahu, he had two distinct images of Tilak in his mind. First was Tilak 'the traditionalist', who stood by Brahminism whereas the second was that of a 'patriot' who suffered grave hardships for freedom of the country. He never mixed the colours of these two images. As a vassal of the Sovereign British Government, he had no alternative but to oppose Tilak. But even while opposing Tilak he was totally aware of his colossal contribution to the freedom movement and his impeccable patriotism. He also knew that India needed that Tilak who was ready to 'die for the country'. That is why he felt that a patriot such as Tilak should be blessed with long life and fine health. It was out of this feeling of affection that he had invited Tilak for medication in his last illness without caring how the British Government would react. In addition, he had sent his most steadfast associates to enquire after Tilak's health and circumstances. There was no formality in his actions. He had no need to observe any formality. Rather the show of affection towards Tilak would amount to treason from the British point of view. But for the sake of "Tilak the patriot', he did not bother about the consequences. And, therefore, on receiving the news of Tilak's demise tears rolled from his eyes as if he had lost a dear relative. These tears were a homage offered by one noble soul to another.

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7.

REVOLUTIONARY MANIFESTO OF 1902

At the height of the Vedokta episode Shahu issued one of his royal edicts that gave a tremendous blow to the opposition. It was made public on July 26, 1902. He was in Europe then.

THE MANIFESTO

This extraordinary manifesto published in the Kolhapur gazette by his order was as below :

"Endeavours have been made in recent years in Kolhapur State to foster and encourage the education of all classes of subjects but so far, His Highness regrets to have to record that those endeavours have not in the case of the more backward classes met with the success that was hoped for. His Highness has had the matter under very careful consideration and has come to the conclusion that this want of success is due to the fact that the rewards for higher education are not sufficiently widely distributed. To remedy this to a certain extent and to establish within the State an incentive to the backward classes of His Highness' subjects to study upto a higher standard His Highness has decided that it is desirable for those classes a larger share of employment in the State service than has hitherto been the case."

"In pursuance of this policy His Highness is pleased to direct that from the date of this order 50% of the vacancies that may occur shall be filled by recruits from among the backward classes. In all offices in which the proportion of officers of the backward classes is at present less than 50 p.c. the next appointment shall be given to the members of these classes."

"A quarterly return of all appointments made after the issue of this order shall be submitted by all heads of Departments."

"For the purpose of these orders the backward classes shall be understood to mean all castes other than Brahmins, Prabhus, Shenwis, Parsees and other advanced classes"[1].

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EXPIOSION OF BOMB TO THE BRAHMINS

None of the rulers of India had ever blessed his subjects with such handsome gift. Keer, the biographer, has rightly described Shahu as the 'Chief herald of the dawn of a new era.'[2] However, the harbinger of the new era seemed like explosion of a bomb to the Brahmins of Maharashtra, especially of Kolhapur. The extent to which the Brahmins had established their dominance in the administration and religious affairs of Kolhapur State has been discussed earlier. Now along with their dominance in religious affairs, Shahu decided to check their supremacy in worldly matters as well. Hence, it was no wonder that his manifesto that appeared like elixir of life to the educationally backward it sounded like a death bell to the Brahmins of Kolhapur.

Prof. Vijapurkar, the mentor of the Brahmin caucus went mad with anger on reading the proclamation. In his journal *Samarth* he wrote, "We had thought of publishing this manifesto surrounded by black borders, the way obituaries are usually written but showed great restraint in giving up this idea." Expressing his fulminations, he had added, "Since the just ambitions of Brahmins in Kolhapur have been interred, this unprecedented declaration would have well deserved the honor of an obituary." Finally, he cursed, "Let us hope God does not react in a dreadful way!"[3]

Lokmanya Tilak, annoyed by this 'indiscreet' step stated that Shahu was 'out of his wits'. He said, "The Maharaja of Kolhapur has declared that henceforth half of all the jobs falling vacant in the State of Kolhapur shall be filled by people of backward communities and remaining by advanced communities such as the Brahmin, Shenvi, Prabhu, Parsee etc. This is an illusory and dangerous step and is likely to cause harm not to the Brahmins but more to the State. While filling the vacancies with people of backward communities, the ability of the candidate needs to be taken into account or not?..... The King's belief that this type of differentiation between the backward and the advanced communities will lead to betterment of the State is utterly undiplomatic and unwise, rather it is a sign of his suffering from mental aberration."[4] In the same vein as *Samarth* and *Kesari* other Brahmin newspapers such as the *Native Opinion, Kalptaru, Prekshak* etc. fiercely attacked the policy of reservations.

Marahatta, the English periodical of *Kesari* group also fired frenzied vollies. Fifty percent reservation to backward classes, it was openly accused, was a ploy of Shahu to increase the proportion of the Marathas, members of his own caste, in the administration. Accusing Shahu of having mixed the issue of caste with State affairs, *Marahatta* wrote, "The journal *Marahatta*' has no objection even if the Maratha Princes spend thousands of rupees to educate their caste brethren. However, we object to attempts of upliftment of one particular caste alone."[5]

WHAT WAS THE REALITY ?

In fact, in the State of Kolhapur, though the Maratha caste constituted a majority, the people of other communities such as the Jain, Lingayat, Muslim etc. were also in a substantial number. The extent of education among these communities was almost the same as among the Marathas. Under such circumstances, the manifesto was going to benefit all non-Brahmin castes equally. But, the Brahmin newspapers blamed Shahu of

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favoritism saying that the benefits of the declaration would accrue only to the Maratha caste. These newspapers also ignored the declaration meant fifty per cent vacancies were still reserved for the advanced castes (mostly Brahmins) who comprised only three per cent of the population of the Kolhapur State and the remaining fifty per cent were distributed among the majority castes which comprised ninety-seven per cent of the population! Actually, the Brahmin grievance was this move would check their unrestrained monopoly in administration and jeopardize the concomitant hegemony they had hitherto enjoyed. Moreover, the biggest danger lay ahead. What if the British Government, in order to restrict the Brahmins and to appease the non-Brahmins, adopted a similar policy of reservations? The British Government looked upon the politically active Brahmin community as their enemy and according to one basic rule of politics that an enemy's enemy is a friend, the British adopting such a policy could not be ruled out.

In Kolhapur State administration, representation of non-Brahmin castes was negligible. In those times, a non-Brahmin person passing matriculation examination was looked upon as a wonder. But the Brahmin bureaucracy would keep in limbo even such well-educated person. This is accounted by Bhaskarrao Jadhav in one of his articles. He writes, "Shahu Maharaja for the first time understood the plight of the Marathas and ninety-five per cent people of the educationally backward population. High-schools and colleges were established in Kolhapur many years ago. But non-Brahmins could not avail much of these means of education. Two Marathas had passed matriculation examination. One of them was appointed in the high-school. But he was not allotted even the job of a teacher and was relegated in the library. The other was compelled to continue in the service of a valet, as he possessed the land granted as remuneration for a valet's job. No wonder then that the less educated Marathas were not at all admitted in the government services. Many Brahmin officers had never appeared for any examination. An order to the effect that only those who were educated in the Rajaram College or Rajaram Highschool should be admitted in the government services of the State was issued during the reign of the previous Chhatrapati. As this order was beneficial to the Brahmins this community was particularly vigilant that it was not violated."[6]

The condition of the government of Kolhapur State described by Bhaskarrao is of the early years of Shahu's reign. Shahu had begun to change this situation by appointing officers like Bhaskarrao, Vichare etc. According to Shahu, if the highly educated members from the backward castes were not given their due "rewards of higher education" in the form of government services, these castes would loose the drive and ambition to acquire higher education. They should not only be provided with educational facilities but also with equal opportunities after acquiring education as per the principle of social equality. Right to service in administration is in a way a share in the enjoyment of political power. Until now, only people belonging to the upper classes of society had enjoyed this right. Shahu Maharaja, it is obvious had decided to hand over to the commoners their just share of political power.

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8.

HOSTEL MOVEMENT

While deploring the King's 1902 declaration of reservations, Tilak's *Kesar*i had said, "This declaration is shocking not only to Brahmins but also to the well-wishers of the Kolhapur State. Besides, we have not heard that the Maharaja had ever before tried to educate the Telis, Tambolis, Muslims, Lingayats."[1] Tilak had nudged Shahu by saying that he had done nothing for education of backward communities for whom he had reserved fifty percent jobs in his administration. Of course, Tilak would not know that this king would henceforth spend his entire life for the amelioration of the downtrodden !

In the backward castes, there was general apathy towards any education in general, let alone the higher education. In case some backward youth happened to acquire higher education against adverse circumstances, the Brahmin bureaucracy would not give him a chance in the administration. As such higher education proved of little help to the members of these communities. This fact was quite disheartening for them. Taking cognizance of this reality, Shahu, for the first time had provided them with the facility of fifty per cent reservations in government jobs in his State. Shahu felt that guarantee of such rewards would encourage them to go for higher education. His prediction was based on observations about the society around and he was not wrong.

THE NEED FOR HOSTELS

There was one more way of creating a liking for higher education among the backward classes. It was providing hostels for lodging and boarding facilities to poor students aspiring for higher education. The Maharaja had already taken first step towards implementation of this idea before the declaration of the manifesto mentioned above. When one looks at this fact it becomes clear how Shahu, at one and the same time thought of various schemes for advancement of the backward classes.

In fact, in the year 1896 itself the Darbar had financed the establishment of a hostel for students who used to come to Kolhapur for higher schooling. Assistant Justice Mr. V. B. Gokhale was its president. As the management of this hostel was with the Brahmins, not a single non-Brahmin student was admitted to the hostel. The class of Brahmins enjoyed

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educational facilities as its exclusive privilege as they believed that education was the domain in which they had a right to unrestrained monopoly.

The State of Kolhapur was looked upon as a Maratha State where the Maratha community was in a majority. But the Marathas too like other communities were educationally backward. An ordinary village might have a couple of well-to-do Maratha families of traditional *Patils* or village chiefs. But such families too seldom showed interest in education. Maratha parents never felt that they should send their sons to Kolhapur for higher education. One important reason behind this attitude was the problem of lodging and boarding in Kolhapur. Today, looking at cities and towns crowded with hostels we may not appreciate seriousness of this problem in those days. It shall be easier to understand if we give a thought to the social conditions of a century ago.

An incident in 1899 may illustrate this. Once Shahu read in a newspaper that one Pandurang, the son of Chimnaji Patil of Wadgaon, had passed Matriculation examination. In those days, a non-Brahmin person passing this examination was a sensational event. Shahu was extremely delighted to read the news. He at once sent his messenger and asked this young lad (P.C.Patil) to come to the fort Panhala. He congratulated and extolled the young boy and enquired whether he had lodging and boarding arrangements in Kolhapur. Patil answered, "There are no Maratha inns in the city. Only the Brahmins have such facilities. The monthly rent of these Brahmin inns is Rs.5. Besides, the Marathas have to pick their own plates after the meals. So I gave up the idea of joining such Brahmin boardings and arranged for my food with a Maratha acquaintance at a monthly rate of rupees three."

"Was there a place to study at least?'

To this question Patil answered, "The space available in their house was not sufficient. There is a government *talim* (palestra) near the highschool. There, five-six boys namely Mama Jadhav, Baliba Patil, Hariba Patil, Hindurao Ghatge etc. with the permission of the in-charge, had arranged to study and stay at nights. I lived with them."[2]

If this was the condition of a Maratha youth from the family of a "Patil', the chief of a village, one can only imagine the condition of persons belonging to other backward castes. Shahu started thinking earnestly. He assured P. C. Patil that he will arrange for his further education. The story did not end here. According to Patil the very next day Shahu called two Maratha officers Raosaheb Dajirao Vichare, Executive Engineer, and Raosaheb Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Assistant *Sarsubha* and started discussions regarding establishment of a hostel for Maratha students.[3]

VICTORIA MARATHA BOARDING

It is of interest to note that earlier Shahu had consulted Justice Ranade and *Namdar* Gokhale, the two liberal leaders from Poona, regarding establishment of such hostels and both had supported the idea. Shahu had also corresponded on this issue with Giles, the Director of the education department of Bombay Presidency and considered his opinion as well. Mr. Giles, in a letter to Shahu writes, "I am extremely happy to receive the Maharaja's letter. I would be pleased to discuss the matter of a high school for Marathas complete with

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lodging and boarding facilities. It is essential to take such special efforts for the progress of Marathas in the field of education. I agree with you on this subject. The habits of Marathas and their outlook are against acquiring higher education. That is why they are left behind in the field of learning as compared to Brahmins. When I visited Kolhapur, I observed that very few Maratha persons' applications are received for jobs in education department. Same is the condition as regards other departments as well. (10 August 1900)"[4]

While consulting the intelligentsia of the society, Shahu had simultaneously made arrangements for the lodging and boarding of P.C.Patil and four other college students in the temple of Lord Dutta at Panhala from his privy purse and started a "Maratha Hostel". Later on, it was shifted to Kolhapur. Soon an assembly of the respectable Marathas of Kolhapur was held under the chairmanship of Dattajirao Ghatage, the paternal uncle of Shahu, and with the help of important Maratha personalities such as Mamasaheb Khanvilkar, Appasaheb Mhaisalkar, Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Dajirao Vichare, Jivajirao Savant, on April 18, 1901 was established the Victoria Maratha Boarding, the first hostel in Kolhapur. The three Maratha youths Jadhav, Vichare and Savant were particularly in the forefront. P. C. Patil was the first student of this first hostel. Later on, he became the Principal of the College of Agriculture at Poona. He obtained two prestigious degrees viz. M.Sc. from the U.S.A. and D.Sc. from Bombay University and attained eminence in the country as an authority on agricultural science. Though the hostel had 'Maratha' in its name, students of other castes such as the Muslims, Shimpi, Koli, Mali, Gavli etc were allowed admission right from the beginning. This showed the catholicity of the Maratha community. The idea of this type of hostel was a novelty in those days and it was solely the brainchild of Shahu himself. Dr. P. C. Patil says in his reminiscences, "Before the official establishment of an independent Maratha hostel (Victoria Maratha Boarding) there used to be clubs (hotels) affiliated to only big colleges in Bombay Presidency. There was not a single hostel managed by a caste or a religious sect, not at least in Maharashtra. There were not even orphanages like the one or two that exist in cities like Poona these days. On this background, it is obvious that the unprecedented idea of establishing hostels for students, especially the idea of different castes assuming responsibility of its member students and establishing inexpensive hostels for their benefit was solely of Shahu Maharaja himself."[5] Over a period of time Shahu, by awarding an annual grant of Rs. 550, land and property whose annual produce was worth Rs. 2,000 and a permanent donation of Rs. 47,000 strengthened the foundations of the Maratha hostel.[6]

In the same year i.e. 1901, a 'Jain Boarding' was established. Later on, twenty more hostels of different castes and communities such as Lingayat, Muslim, Untouchables, Sonar, Shimpi, Panchal, Gaud Saraswat, Indian Christen, Chandraseniya Kayast Prabhu, Vaishya, Dhor-Chambar, Sutar, Nabhik Somvansahiya Arya Kshatriya, Koshti etc. – were set up under the inspiration and guidance of the Maharaja. By providing each hostel with a building, open spaces and permanent means of income, due arrangements for the welfare of underprivileged students were made.

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TECHNIQUE AND EXPERIMENTS IN HOSTEL MOVEMENT

Establishing hostels was Rajarshi Shahu's novel social experiment. He had developed his own method in this regard. It was not on passing whims that he just ordered his officers to establish hostels. His way was first to have a closer interaction with leaders of the community for whom he planned to set up a hostel. Shahu's personality, his image and warmth of communication was so effective that these leaders would begin to nurse a desire themselves of doing something constructive for their community. And when right atmosphere was created he would pass on the idea of having a hostel for students of their community. Shahu hardly took direct initiative and leadership.. He was keen to see that every caste developed its own leadership. He encouraged and provided all assistance to leaders who approached him with the idea of having a boarding house. Peoples' initiative and involvement was more important for him. Such was his wisdom. This technique was so effective that the people felt that they were doing something positive for their caste and derived satisfaction from it. Thus Shahu's 'hostel movement' was not imposed by the King from above; Shahu ensured that it became a popular movement and soon it spread out of the State of Kolhapur over entire Maharashtra.

Shahu, it seems, was obliged to follow a different path as regards the 'untouchables'. The community was so neglected and isolated that it was impossible to find among them leaders with zeal for education and ambition for collective emancipation. Shahu motivated the Maratha activists such as Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Mahadev Dongre, Shripatrao Shinde, Khanderao Bagal and Ganpatrao Kadam to create awareness about education among the untouchables. Encouraged by Shahu, this group in 1908 set up a separate boarding house for the children of 'untouchables' in Kolhapur called the Miss Clarke Hostel. Miss Violet Clarke was the daughter of the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke. Violet, a kind woman with compassion for 'untouchables', had organized her special charity dance performance and donated the amount of Rs. 5,000 thus collected for a hostel for that community planned by Shahu. Thus the hostel was named after her.[7]

Another community of Muslims required different handling. The Maharaja had a great affection for the Muslim community. But the Muslims were even more apathetic to education. Shahu's efforts from 1902 to establish a separate hostel for the Muslims had proved fruitless for a while. Promising Muslim students were being accommodated in the Maratha boarding. Finally, in 1906 Shahu himself took initiative and convened a meeting of important Muslims of the city. A journal *Induprakash* narrates the proceedings of this meeting : "His Highness ordered his secretary to declare that he was willing to contribute a sum of Rs. 3,000 if the Muslim community was ready to collectively contribute an equal amount for setting up a hostel. An amount of Rs. 4,000 was collected on the spot. His Highness was elated by the enthusiasm of the gathering and announced an additional contribution of Rs.1000 on his behalf. Besides, he expressed his desire that the remainder of all the earnings that accrued out of religious undertakings such as the *Dargahs*, mosques etc., in the State after the necessary expenditure towards religious

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commitments as allotted by the arbitrators of the community, should be transferred to the boarding fund to defray educational expenses of the orphan, poor and promising students and asked whether the Muslims would agree for such arrangement. The Muslim gathering very gratefully and unanimously declared its consent.[8]

Further, at the same meeting a 'Mohammedan Education Society' was established and a proposal for a Muslim Boarding was approved. Shahu did not rest at that. He accepted the chair of the society ex-officio, appointed Diwan (the Prime Minister) of the State as the ex-officio vice-chairman and the *Mamledar* of Karveer as the ex-officio secretary. In this way, generous beneficence of the Kolhapur Royal Court was showered on the Muslim community permanently. Apart from contributing a handsome amount from the Court, Shahu also channelised the incomes from mosques and *Dargahs* towards the expenditure of the boarding. In 1920, Shahu's teacher Fraser visited Kolhapur to be present at the Royal Court for the ceremony to lay the foundation stone for the double storied building of the Muslim Boarding. Shahu donated Rs. 5,500 towards expenses besides arranging to provide teak wood from state forests for construction of the building![9]

Around this time, a novel experiment in hostel movement was made in Kolhapur by social activists inspired by Shahu. That was establishment of 'Shri Prince Shivaji Maratha Free Boarding House', for the poorest students from Maratha community. Bapurao Shinde, a social activist, had been running a students' hostel for free in Poona. The students of this hostel went out asking for *madhukari*.* The tradition of gigivng Brought the food so collectd to the hostel and had their meals together. Shripatrao Shinde founder of the journal *Vijayi Maratha* once told Shahu about this hostel when he was in Poona. He knew how poor Brahmin children rigorously followed the tradition of *madhukari*, went from door-to-door begging for alms without compromising their dignity to pursue their education. Shahu was impressed to hear that now Maratha children too were inspired and determined enough to follow this system and educate themselves. He made a surprise visit to the hostel where he saw unclad poor children arranging the gathered food according to its quality. Shahu was overwhelmed. Shripatrao's biographer writes: " Shahu Maharaja patted on Shripatrao' shoulders and said with a clammy heart, 'Shripatrao! How happy I am to see Maratha childern begging alms to educate themselves.' With a heavy heart and tears flowing down his cheeks, Shahu added, 'Now I have hope, my community will not lie neglected in the dust.'"[10]

Young activists close to Shahu decided to conduct the experiment in Kolhapur too. Shripatrao Shinde, Mamasaheb Minchekar, Khanderao Bagal, Baburao Yadav, Ramchandra Babaji Jadhav (Dasram) etc., to begin with, gathered ten needy Maratha children and assigned them some with well-to-do families to seek alms from them on fixed days. The needy student on fixed days would go to the assigned families to have meals with them. Many education conscious families volunteered to support this system. The participation of society was important. A comprehensive awareness about education was developed through this experiment. Slowly the number of

* The tradition of giving dressed food in alms to poor Brahmin students.

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students began to rise and the campaigners began to slog making arrangements for their food. Shahu was keenly observing this experiment. Arranging free food for 100 odd students was not difficult for Shahu himself. He refrained from this because he believed that awareness could not be artificially created; willingness of backward caste children to tread difficult path for the sake of education was more important. Though falteringly, students were trying hard to stand on their own feet to acquire education; this was the way for creating social awakening. As such, he felt it necessary to give this experiment some time. After a while when it became strenuous for social activists involved, he stepped forward. He showered this hostel with his benefaction, donated a large building named *Kothishala* to the hostel and deposited Rs. 7,000 in the treasury to meet its expenses. He also granted seven acres of land to the hostel. On this very land later arose huge buildings of the hostel. He permanently transferred for the benefit of the hostel the income that accrued from the 100 acres of land belonging to the *Ramnathgiri Math* (monastery) in the Nool village in Gadhinglaj taluka. An order that made it imperative for all educational institutions in the state to impart training free of cost to every student of this hostel was passed.[11] There has been one distinguishing characteristic of the two Maratha hostels in Kolhapur: students from all backward communities were granted admission there along with Maratha students. Students from extremely poor families were looked after free of cost in these hostels.

Shahu was very proud of his hostel movement. Though this movement was inspired, initiated and actively patronized by him personally, he sincerely accorded the credit for its success to the education conscious people of his State. In the year 1920 in his address at the foundation laying ceremony of Shri Udaji Maratha Students' Hostel in Nasik he had said. "I state with pride that the people of my tiny state have acquired special renown in at least one field. Their example has been followed at different places. The British and other people call British Parliament as the Mother of all the Parliaments with great pride. In the same way, Kolhapur has deservedly attained fame as the Mother of Students' Hostels."[12]

The royal support Shahu extended to the hostel movement was not limited to the confines of Kolhapur State. He was generous and open handed in granting economic assistance to many boarding houses at places like Pune, Ahemadnagar, Nasik and Nagpur in Maharashtra. He continued giving pecuniary assistance to social workers from various places to set up hostels for backward class students until the end of his reign. He was so convinced of the utility of the idea that at one time he had given a serious thought to establishing a hostel in London![13]

CASTE ISSUE IN HOSTEL MOVEMENT

Some critics find fault with Shahu for promoting caste-wise hostels saying this was against his crusade to eradicate caste discrimination. Prima-facie, this argument appears logical. However, a closer scrutiny of the question why Shahu, who fought so fiercely the system of untouchability and caste discrimination established boarding houses based on caste, would reveal that his policy was commensurate with the ambience of the times. It was not possible for him to destroy in one day the caste

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system which acquired shape and solid foundations over thousands of years. The distinguishing characteristic of this system was that every caste looked upon the one below it with disdain and slight; it staunchly kept to itself in isolation, socialized within its own tiny circle, and preserved its independence with uncompromising spirit. Under such circumstances if Shahu Maharaja were to establish one big all-encompassing hostel meant for students belonging to all castes and religions, the caste-conscious parents would never allow their children to such hostels for the fear of loosing the caste. As opposed to this, parents showed courage in sending their children to hostels in Kolhapur meant exclusively for their caste; they felt assured that even if their children acquired modern education, the caste would remain intact. As such, children belonging to different castes, especially backward, started learning. Although the children resided in hostels meant parochially for their caste, the fact was that they were earning education and knowledge. That, Shahu believed, was the top priority. He hoped that once educated, these children would certainly realize the hollowness of caste distinctions. To develop the awareness that caste was more significant than family and society was more important than the caste, dissemination of knowledge was a prerequisite, he felt.

An example would clarify this issue better. As we have seen, Shahu had set up Miss Clarke Hostel for 'untouchable' caste students. Even there, a lot of mutual contempt about each other's castes existed among these students.. When Shahu realized that not all untouchable students could stay together, he set up a separate hostel for students belonging to the untouchable castes of *Dhor* (curriers and tanners) and *Chambhar* (workers in leather) in 1919. This means that undue pride about one's caste was not an exclusive feature of the upper castes alone. It was equally staunch among the lower castes too. Under such circumstances, Shahu had no alternative but to set up separate hostels for different castes and once he decided to follow this path, he utilized the pride of every caste in a very constructive way to further the cause of his hostel movement. As early as 1901, while launching the Maratha hostel, he had thought of a Jain hostel. During that period, a religious conference of the Jains was in progress at Stavnidhi, a place of pilgrimage near Nipani. Shahu took this opportunity to send a message to the conference that the Jain community should come forward to set up a boarding house in Kolhapur to facilitate progress of their children; such efforts of the community would be backed by active support and sympathy of the Darbar. The Jains, inspired by this message stepped forward and the 'Digambar Jain Hostel' was set up in Kolhapur a month after the Maratha hostel. In the case of the *Lingayat* community, Shahu himself had convened a meeting of its leaders and made an earnest appeal to set up a hostel for their children too.[14]

Shahu wisely channelised the self-respect of each caste towards constructive activity like spread of education. Every caste has its own share of respectable and affluent people who have concern for social well-being. They do nurse a subtle desire to do something constructive for their caste. Knowing this tendency, Shahu would appeal to the sentiments of such elements and get things done. Shahu felt that the people of each caste should be made to crave for educating their children and with

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that craving they should collectively endeavor to raise basic finance for a boarding house. Shahu so wished because he thought the active participation of castes in the process of establishment of hostels was important. Indeed, participation of people in the hostel movement was quite high because of these policies and the methods adapted by Shahu.

RESULTS

Shahu's hostel movement produced thousands of great men (who could pursue education, thanks to hostel facilities created by the movement) to play a major role in the shaping and building of modern Maharashtra. Many men, from agricultural expert Dr. P.C. Patil, to the Governor of Punjab, Wrangler D. C. Pavte, from litterateur G. L. Thokal to internationally renowned educationist J.P. Naik, from peoples' leader Balasaheb Desai to the Communist leader Comrade Mirajkar, and several others who acquired prominence in their respective fields, were the products of Shahu's hostels in Kolhapur. Many who spearheaded the progressive movements in different fields such as politics, education, economy, arts, and society over the three fourths of the 20th century in Maharashtra were moulded in the hostels of Kolhapur. Kolhapur came to the fore as an important educational center next only to Mumbai and Pune because of these hostels. The non-elite communities spread over a vast expanse from Mumbai-Thane to Belgaum-Dharwad began to look towards these hostels as centers that would bring prosperity to their children. As a result, thousands of young men were attracted towards Kolhapur from every nook and corner of Maharashtra. These hostels played an important role in the making of the highly educated first generation from amongst the Non-Brahmin communities of Maharashtra and shaped not only the generation that was contemporary to Shahu, but also following three generations. The progress of the non-elite communities in contemporary Western Maharashtra that we witness today is the result of the foundation laid by the hostels of Shahu. Of the many levers that Shahu used to lift the non-elite classes out of murky ignorance, the most effective one was the hostel movement. It is a historical truth that thousands of children belonging to the *Bahujan Samaj* who could educate themselves because the hostel facility was available, have now advanced in life and society during the last seven and a half decades. These men and women would have remained deprived of education had these hostels not been there.

One more outcome of the Movement needs to be noted. Many social workers, inspired by this movement established hostels for educationally backward communities all over Maharashtra. Among them, *Karmaveer* Bhaurao Patil who called himself the disciple of Shahu is the most glorious example. Bhaurao himself was a product of the hostel movement. Not only did he take the nectar of knowledge to villages and remote areas of Maharashtra by establishing the Rayat Education Society, but also built hostels along with schools and colleges for poor students. Karmaveer went one-step ahead of his Guru by giving students the slogan "earn and learn', the mantra of a self-reliant life. It should be noted that the umbilical cord of his work was directly connected to the hostel movement of Chhatrapati Shahu.

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9.

SALVATION OF UNTOUCHABLES : EDUCATION

We have seen earlier that Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde, while discussing the person of Rajarshi Shahu has described him as a man with a great mind which evolved and bloomed continuously. In the same article, he writes, "From our meetings over the active years of *Bharatiya Nirashrit Sahaykari Mandali* - Indian Desolate Helpers Association - (1906-1909) after its establishment, I could clearly make out that his sympathy towards the untouchables was yet to take shape. Of course, it was just not his character to have hatred towards untouchables in his tender heart. Nevertheless, the two states of not having hatred and the springing of love are as apart as heaven and earth. This distance too, he gradually traversed."[1]

ORTHODOX IN THE BEGINNING

Fraser the tutor of Shahu had imbibed in him the values of the materialistic Western culture when he was a student. He was not equipped to instil in him the values of Hindu culture. These were imbued by the conformist ambience within the Palace and the orthodox societal conditions without. It was no wonder then that as a result his mind too had turned orthodox. He himself later candidly writes, "Such was the mindset of the King himself at one time that even if not touched by an 'untouchables', he would think such contact to have occurred and take a purifying bath."[2] The same Shahu imbued with such strong orthodox values later fought fiercely against the two evil customs of caste discrimination and Untouchability. This transformation had not occurred of its own accord nor had it taken place within a year or two. A lot of water had to pass through the Panchganga for it to happen.

Shahu had himself experienced the burning pangs of humiliation from the advocates of racial superiority in the *Vedokta* conflict. The king of the Marathas was called a *Shudr*a and humiliated by the people of the elite class in his own kingdom. Though this conflict apparently ended when this class accepted Shahu as a Kshatriya, the feeling of antagonism against him among a disgraced Brahmin class kept boiling below the surface. Very soon, this feeling took a militant turn. From 1906 onwards, the Brahmin militants were becoming

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increasingly malicious and aggressive. All illegal and nasty methods, from character assassination to his physical elimination were tried without compunction. A positive outcome of these evil machinations was that Shahu's will to fight the evil of racial superiority and caste discrimination became stronger. His policies now had a stronger moral and principled foundation. Also, he could understand the pain and the suffering of the millions of the downtrodden treated and made to live like animals by the racists who had dared to call even the Chhatrapati a Shudra. He intensely realized that in the struggle against the Brahmins, these downtrodden- the Shudras- should first be released from mental and social bondages. This realization is what Maharshi Shinde has called the springing of love (in Shahu's heart) for the 'untouchables'. This spring was largely dormant in the first decade of the 20th century. It gradually surfaced during the second decade and the nectar flowing from it quenched the centuries old thirst of the untouchables.

SPECIAL EFFORTS TO SPREAD EDUCATION

Rajarshi Shahu had adopted a policy of using education as a means for amelioration of all backward communities in his State. Accordingly, hostels meant for students of different castes were set up in Kolhapur. It has been described earlier how as early as in 1908 Shahu had started a hostel for 'untouchables' with his associates at the vanguard such as Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Mahadeo Dongre, Khanderao Bagal and Shripastrao Shinde. To further this cause an organization named 'Association for Spread of Education Amongst Untouchable Castes' was formed. Bhaskarrao Jadhav was its chief. This association strived vigorously from finding students for the hostel to raising the standard of teaching to the level of schools for so-called touchables. However, the apathy for education among the untouchables was quite grave; if they had no will, how to feed them? Shahu made sincere efforts to overcome such difficulties.

In those days there were separate schools for the 'touchables' and 'untouchables'. The custom of untouchability was so intense that it was unimaginable that a caste student would share a seat with an untouchable. Circumstances were not conducive to eliminate the custom by enacting a law. Social awakening was necessary to create such an ambience. Over a period of time when circumstances changed, Shahu took that step as well. But in the contemporary social conditions he was left with the only option of awakening the awareness for education among the untouchables and increasing the number of their schools. At the time of his coronation (1894) there were only five schools meant for the untouchables with barely 168 students in the State. In 1907-8, this number rose to 16 and 416 respectively. As a result of Shahu's incessant efforts, the number of schools went on increasing gradually. Within a span of just four years, the number of the schools rose to 27 and that of the students to 636. *Mahar, Maang, Chambar, Dhor*, were the main untouchable castes. Their collective population in the State was more than one lakh at the beginning of the century. The proportion of education might appear negligible when juxtaposed against the population, but considering the historical social conditions where these castes were not allowed to earn any knowledge, the educational progress exhibited by them was definitely

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substantial though slow. The credit for this progress went to the liberal educational policy adopted by Shahu towards untouchables. The administrative report of the year 1912-1913 says, "....The substantial progress in the spread of education among the untouchables is the result of various facilities that the Chhatrapati Maharaja specially provided to the depressed castes and communities and the intense efforts that local organizations took for the spread of education amongst the pariahs. Though in a very small proportion, people from the upper castes stepped forward to help their outcaste religious brethren and extended a hand of cooperation and sympathy towards those who had been the unfortunate victims of inhuman treatment. This is indicative of the dissolution of the cobwebs of misunderstanding in the minds of the upper caste people as a result of the wise and liberal policy of the Kolhapur Government. "[3]

The standards of syllabii for caste schools and pariah schools were different. The pariah school standard was so low that a student passing the IVth standard was not really equipped to enter the Vth - the high school. As such, it was impossible for an untouchable student to get admission into the high school. To overcome this obstacle Shahu started special tution classes to raise the quality of the untouchable students who passed their IVth standard. Shripatrao Shinde, ever willing to help people, stepped forward to undertake this task. Bhaskarrao Jadhav writes, "...With Rajarshi Shahu's encouragement a group was formed to broaden the spread of higher education among the untouchables. The *Mahar* schools with their *Mahar* and *Chambhar* teachers were already in existence. But students of these schools hardly crossed Marathi standard IVth. Teaching them English was difficult. They would not grasp the higher learning as their IVth class was not up to the mark. To get rid of this obstacle it was decided to conduct a special course for them. The first teacher we got for this course was extremely concerned, duty-conscious, and enthusiastic. He began his social service giving a big thrust to the cause of untouchables' education. This person was our good friend Shripatrao Shinde. The children trained under him later became proficient in English and some even topped in class. Unless the foundations of any education are made strong there is no use building the superstructure."[4]

SOME UNIQUE ORDERS

Some instances of special efforts Chhatrapati Shahu made for spread of education among the'untouchables' during this period are available. One of the orders of 1906 says that there was one Night School in Kolhapur for untouchables such as *Mahars, Chambhars* etc. Then by the order of 28th November, 1906, Shahu converted it into a permanent school.[5] The order of 4th October 1907 finalized a school for the girls from the untouchable castes namely *Chamhbar* and *Dhor*. Also an annual provision of Rs.96 was made for that school under the outlay meant for female education in the state budget.[6] In the year 1909, land was made available to the untouchables' hostel set up by Bhaskarrao Jadhav and his associates. In the order issued to this effect, the King says, "Among all the backward castes there are no other castes as ill-fated as the castes considered untouchables and there is no other means as potent as education to change their conditions. One year's experience has proved that these people are quite capable of learning. However, their material

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conditions being extremely miserable, a students' hostel for them would help them a lot. As such the application of Bhaskarrao Jadhav, the head of the 'Association For Spread Of Education Among Untouchable Castes', dated 5-3-1909 requesting for the grant of the building of the *Chambhar* school in Karveer (Kolhapur) and the land inside the compound has been approved by His Highness." (5-3-1909)[7]

The most important order was issued on 24th of November 1911. By this order, education was made totally free for all untouchables in the State.[8] Besides, scholarships were granted from time to time to meritorious untouchable students.[9] One such order of 7th April 1911, taking into consideration the 'miserable conditions' of the untouchable community and to 'encourage' their learning, allotted Rs. 2,500 towards provision of books, slates and pencils free of cost to the pariah students.[10] In the same month, special scholarships of Rs.8 per month were declared for untouchable students enrolled for *'Talathi** course' started by Shahu.[11]

During this period (1918-19) Shahu had resolved to eradicate the evil of untouchability from his State and had begun to issue orders concerning abolition of untouchability one after the other. The repercussions of this resolve in the field of education were but obvious. On September 28 1919, Shahu issued an order closing down separate schools meant for untouchables. In that order he says, "In the territory of Karveer (excepting the Jahagir territories) there are separate schools for the children of untouchables. These shall be closed down from the coming *Dassera* festival and the children shall be admitted in government schools along with the children of other castes. As the practice of touch-taboo is not to be practiced in government schools the children of all castes and religions shall be made to sit together."[12]

Shahu continued to provide copious economic assistance to the students from the untouchable community even after this order.[13] In 1920, in memory of his youngest son Prince Shivaji who had died in an accident, Shahu issued promissory notes worth Rs. 10,000 for the 'encouragement of learning among untouchables' and started eight monthly scholarships of Rs. 5 from the interest accrued thereof. Especially notable is the fact that three out of these eight scholarships were meant for untouchable girls. The King states in this order that in case such girls are not found in the State, the scholarships should be awarded to deserving girls from outside the State.[14] His concern for untouchables was not restricted in any boundary. Instances of his generous assistance to several untouchables' hostels outside his State at places such as Nasik, Nagpur etc. are in plenty.[15]

How very bold and revolutionary were the steps taken by Shahu in the field of education in order to bring the untouchables at par with the upper castes can be gathered from an article by Bhaskarrao Jadhav. He writes, "....the Maharaja also planned thoughtfully to provide appropriate religious education to these children considered untouchables. He utilized the preachers of the Arya Samaj towards this cause. According to their practice, they took these children into the Arya Samaj fold, performed the ceremony

* The stipendiary accountant and registrar of a village.

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of *Upanayana* (investiture with sacred thread), and for the first time initiated them into the Vedas. This helped remove the ingrained notion of inferiority from these childrens' mind and infused into them a new-found confidence and sense of equality. As a result they began to progress. In schools, they dealt with other children as equals and they were also treated as equals by others. Consequently, untouchability petered away from high schools.[16]

King Shahu was the first king in the known history of India who performed *upanayana* ceremony of the 'untouchable' children, initiated them into the Vedas and elevated them to the so-called superior level of the Brahmins.

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10.

SALVATION OF UNTOUCHABLES : MANIFESTOS

From 1918 onwards, Chhatrapati Shahu's activities seem to have gathered momentum in various fields such as the *Satyashodhak* movement, Non-Brahmin party's movement, salvation of the untouchables, abolition of caste discrimination etc. Especially in the movement of the untouchables' salvation, he continued his incessant efforts to free the untouchable community of the bondages that had crystallized over centuries by taking revolutionary steps one after the other. Apart from compassion he felt for 'untouchables', there was a driving force in him to pursue his goals. So was his particular mindset shaped out of an harsh assault on him by destiny.

June 12, 1918 proved to be an extremely unfortunate day of his life. That day, his youngest son, Prince Shivaji, chasing a wild boar for the hunt fell from a racing stallion and died. The Prince, outstandingly intelligent and handsome, passed away at the early age of twenty leaving his father and wife in deep sorrow. The regal daughter-in-law, Indumatidevi, was barely twelve. The sight of the bare white forehead of his innocent daughter-in-law* only deepened his grief..

'THIS, MY PIOUS DUTY'

The cruel blow of destiny changed Shahu's life. He renounced the regal riches and pleasures of the palace, became almost a recluse and started living a hermitic life in the Rajputwadi camp at the foot of Jotiba Hill not very far away from Kolhapur. He seemed to have lost all interest in material life and became ascetic. The feeling that 'I exist for the welfare of others' gripped him and he made up his mind to utilize the remaining days of his life for the amelioration of the downtrodden and the oppressed. In June 1919, in a letter to the Governor of Bombay he writes, "Especially after the demise of my son a strong desire has taken over me. It is goading me to take effective measures towards betterment of the poor and destitute class immediately. In my small State, I am trying to fulfil this desire by employing all possible means. I feel a kind of inner voice is guiding me and driving me to help the poor. Even if I succeed fractionally in achieving this objective, I would consider my life a success..."

"... I consider it my pious duty to extricate the backward classes from the swamps of

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poverty and sorrow. I believe, I am serving the humanity as a whole by serving the backward classes. And that is my duty....."[1]

END OF *HAJERI* AND FORCED LABOUR

Chhatrapati Shahu seems to have arrived at the great and sublime humanitarian outlook that the service to the depressed and oppressed is truly the service to humanity. Thenceforth he carried out his struggle for liberation of untouchables guided by this belief. The first order of liberation of untouchables was passed on July 27, 1918 and published in the Gazette of Kolhapur on August 3, 1918. It abolished the inhuman custom of 'attendance' *(hajeri)* forced on the untouchables. It said, "In our territory the people of the criminal castes are compelled attendance at the office of the Police Patil every day. Some castes are spared this obligation. However, at some places these castes are still forced to report daily. It has put the people of these castes into a lot of discomfort and impeded their way to make an honorable living. This impediment needs to be eliminated. Towards such elimination we command the four castes namely *Mahar, Mang, Ramoshi,* and *Berad* shall be freed of the compulsion of attendance. However, this order does not apply to those people of these castes who have been sentenced for criminal offence and they shall continue with the attendance. This order shall be put into effect forthright."[2]

On 29 September, one more edict of Shahu was gazetted which absolved another criminal caste called *Gattechor* from the practice of attendance. In addition, he has also provided for the release of even a sentenced person if he happened to show good behaviour for five years after the end of his term.[3]

Later, addressing the Mangaon Conference Shahu discussed why he put a stop to *hajeri* system under which the suspects in criminal tribes had to register attendance at the nearest police post or government office. He says, "Because of this system, these poor people had to face a lot of tyranny at the hands of village workers and officers. The officers made these people work without payment threatening them with an absentee mark when twelve annas was the rate of labour in villages. At the most poor would be given some frugal eatables as compensation. A new kind of slavery is being practised in this twentieth century, different from the classical one!- The people on *hajeri* could not meet their sick relatives and kins even in an emergency. Many times such ailing relatives died without even the last meeting. I have seen in person that a lot many times parents of small ailing children were carried by force to labour any time; they returned only to find their child dead for want of proper care and attention as there was nobody to provide in parent's forced absence. What else can be a worse tyranny?..... In case of a theft in village, the life of these people on *hajeri* becomes miserable. All people of the community, good and bad, are threatened and subjected to atrocious harassment and torture. I can tell from my experience that the rate of crime is more among the groups not on *hajeri* than those who are. And if *non-hajeri* group are forced on *hajeri* they become shameless and take to crime. This had been the only use of this practice! Not treating them with respect and dignity does not change them for good. In any case if 'attendance' is compulsory, humiliation is perpetual, why should one remain honest? This was the effect that *hajeri* had on their mind. Since abolition of this system, crime rate has come down. This is because

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everyone wants to live with dignity."[4]

Another inhuman system of *Vethvarla** had been forced on the untouchables, especially the *Mahar* community. Under this system, a *Mahar* would be made to do sundry services for the village *Patil-Kulkarni* or other officials. In fact, a Mahar was an important *Watandar*** of the self-sufficient village system. However, his *Watan* was not one of prestige like that of *Patil-Kulkarni* or *Deshmukh-Deshpande*. Every Watan holder had to do government and village job and for that, he had got rights and privileges. *Mahars* also had their rights and privileges for their labour, but they were petty in nature. *Mahar's* labor, along with the other village works comprised the burden of the *Vethvarla* (forced labour) system. They were shackled to this system over centuries and generations along with the *Watan* of *Maharki*. *Mahars* could not abjure their *Watan* and leave the village. As such, they could not get rid of the shackles of forced labour. In a way, this *Watan* of *Maharki* was social slavery. Shahu after deliberating on his own proposal of abolishing this Watan and setting this community free of bondage passed an ordinance on June 26, 1918, "To transfer the income of *Mahar* community from *Balute account* to the account of village right holders", according to an available record.[5] This meant that the *Watan* lands of *Mahars* would become *Rayatwari* lands as per this ordinance. It implied that the Mahars too would now be required to pay tax on their land like other common populace. However, with the extinction of the *Watan* land, the system of forced labour would also stand abolished.

It seems this ordinance was not brought into effect. This was because Shahu wished that *Mahars* should not be forced towards this end. Instead, he expected self-reformation on their part which should make them abjure their *Watan* lands themselves. In an order dated 1st August 1918, Shahu says, ".... If Mahars apply for inclusion of their *Watans* into the *rayatwari* lands,*** they shall not be made to labour under *Vethvarla* from the date of application. If anyone uses might to force this people to work under *Vethvarla*, he shall be dismissed from the office without awarding his due pension. If such person is a *Watandar*, he shall be deprived of his *Watan* and this should be duly notified to the village workers. All the needful shall be done accordingly."[6] It becomes clear from the order that as per the previous ordinance the *Mahar Watans* of the State had not been abolished en-masse.

Later at the Mangaon Conference, he voiced his disappointment about *Mahar Watans*. He says, "....But I was not able to curb *Vethvarla* because these people were all after *Watans*. And how much of *Watan* at that? Two *Aare* of land or a basket of grains! No one can be fed with that much. But with their attachment to the *Watan* which, they thought gave them dignity and status they continued to live in the villages and were forced to indulge in crime for sustenance. Hence I requested all *Mahar Balutedars and Watandars* not to pine for these frugal *Watans*. Give them up. To *Mahars* I suggested that they divide village *Maharki* lands in ten-acre pieces, and let commissioned *Mahars* till the land. Hand over the produce to the elder amongst you and use it the way Patils, or commissioned *Shiledars* use it. That is appoint per village only eight *Mahar Shiledars* or commissioned *Shiledars*. That would lead to the end of slavery and I would happily arrange to

* Unpaid forced labour for government or government officer.
** A holder of a hereditary estate or office.
***Land for which a tenant has to pay tax to government

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provide them with new commissions. If this were done the other *Mahar* people would be free to do any business in the village or outside anywhere else. That would also end the starvation that all of you suffer under the present system. My suggestion has been accepted by the *Mahars* of Karveer and the rest will follow them, I am sure. I hope my dear friend Mr. Ambedkar will help us to achieve this end."[7]

Within a month of Mangaon Conference, Shahu abolished the unjust *Vethvarla* system by law. In the order issued to that effect the King says, "Forced labour shall not be taken from the untouchable *Mahars, Maangs* etc by anyone except the members of the Royal family and in connection with matters related to the State Office. As such, no state regent or administrative officer right up to *Raobahaduur Diwansaheb* shall compel the said people except for the performance of aforementioned jobs. If a Patil employs a *Mahar* for *Begar*, he shall be stripped of his *Watan*. If anyone employs a *Maang* under this system to do the jobs such as *Doar-Nada* he shall be severely punished."[8]

Around this time, as stated by Shahu at the Mangaon conference (May 3, 1920), all land of the *Mahar*ki was distributed among community elders each receiving a piece of 8 to 10 acres. They were 'recruited into Government services' and allotted '*Sanad*' of appointment. One available '*Sanad*' says, "The sixteen persons appointed are to serve the government. They are to be at the service of His Highness, Her Highness and the Prince. If need be, they are to serve Shri Mahalaxmi Karveer Nivasini* as well. They are to serve as conveyors of government mail and messages."[9] The distinguishing feature of this *Sanad* is that the Shahu has taken the *Mahars* into the service of King, the Queen and Prince apparent. Moreover, if need be they were even to serve the goddess Mahalaxmi.

CONFISCATION OF MAHAR WATANS

Evidently, it was not possible to employ even a fraction of all *Mahars* from all villages in the State in government service. Besides, those who lost land would remain dissatisfied. The solution was to confiscate the *Mahar Watan* of all the *Mahars* enmasse, convert their lands into *Rayatwari* lands in their names, and free them from the obligation of the *Watan* once and for all. Shahu instantly brought into effect this decision. He got applications filled from the *Mahars* of every village and confiscated the *Mahar Watan* of that village immediately- (May 1921).[10] It seems this application was prepared by well-educated volunteers from the Mahar community. One such application was found in the documents of Gangaram Kamble. It says, "We, the Mahar people, declared untouchables by observances and usages, wicked customs and rituals and the bondages of the Hindu community, are ostracized and made to live beyond the outskirts of inhabitations. That has resulted in our total deprivation in all aspects. All other communities are acquiring knowledge in various ways. They are now on the path of progress. But we have remained bereft of any development and happiness. We did not even remain human. We sunk to the lowest ebb.

"His Highness Maharaja Chhatrapati is trying for our betterment and reformation in many directions. He set up boardings, opened doors of the temples of knowledge, provided employment to many, facilitated

* Chief deity of Kolhapur.

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the entry of some in the elite profession of law and keeping aside the taboos of touch and contacts, treated us with affection like his own children! For all this, our community worships him like God and our generations will be obliged to him for his generosity!"

"Even then, a look at the populace of our community makes us despondent! We just don't understand what to do! We begin to feel that the improvement that has taken place is just not enough!"

"There is a far too much attachment for *Watans* among the Hindu community. However, there is nothing to feel proud about our *Watans* and our *Watan* service. But out of the blind tradition, like an insect in hell we find even this *Watan* dear. To free us from this petty *Watan* employment, His Highness issued an ordinance, decided that the government should employ one *Mahar* per ten acres of land, and remove others out of employment. However, this ordinance doesn't serve the purpose. For, the land that other *Mahars* possess would be lost and they would remain disgruntled. Secondly, the distribution of all the land among a few *Mahars* would still perpetuate the yoke of *Watan* service on their necks. Our conditions will not improve until the last of miserly *Watan* service hangs around our neck. Therefore, we want this *Watan* service itself be abolished."

"Our humble suggestion to the Government is as under: The devolution of land the way it has been devolved till date be continued. Do not confuse or change the ownership. Only that all the *Maharki Watan* be removed out of Number 9 *Inam* forms and transferred to Number 5 *Rayatwari* forms. Secondly, all *Mahar* people be freed of *Watan* service. Let them be spared any obligation of *Watan* service towards either the Government or the public. That would accord us some freedom and time to engage in some other business as well. No one loses in this arrangement; no one remains displeased either. Our *Watan* service amounts to performing forced labour of the village, pounding wood, carting away animal cadaver, and carrying out filthy jobs of the village. As long as these tasks remain forced upon us under the guise of *Watan* service, we would always remain miserly. Once this service is gone, we will have freedom of occupation and would be able to pursue other means of livelihood and the blemish we carry of lowliness and untouchability would disappear gradually."

"Now the question that remains is of government service. The solution is simple. As our lands become *Rayatwari* lands, a certain amount of land tax would accrue to the government. Out of this revenue, the Government can appoint any number of employees that are needed and get its jobs done for a remuneration. As such, we pray to the government that all our *Watans* of *Maharki* be removed off the *Inam* and converted into the *Rayatwari* and all the *Mahars* be freed from the *Watan* services."[11]

This piece is a very important document of the social history of contemporary times. Its content is the yearning of the awakened *Mahar* community of the State of Kolhapur. After confiscating the *Mahar Watan* of every village in this fashion, Shahu once again issued an order warning all the village heads and government officers against compelling *Mahars* into forced labour and threatened them of dire consequences in case they did not oblige-(15 July 1921).[12]

It was clear that the government treasury would be strained on confiscation of *Mahar* lands. For, it freed the *Mahars* of the obligation of service to the government and necessitated the appointment of paid

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employees to do their jobs. When the government officers brought this risk to Shahu's notice, he overruled their advice saying, "I do not care even if my treasury empties for realization of this cause! But I want to put an end to this custom that deprives a human being of humanity."[13]

As regards the *Mahar Watan*, many biographers of Shahu have said that he abolished the *Watans* and transferred the Watan-holdings to their possession in the year 1918 itself.[14] However, a meticulous study of the contemporary documents reveals that the Shahu completed the task of confiscation step by step educating the community on the issue. One has to infer that the process began in the year 1918 and was complete by the middle of 1921.

One more point needs to be noted here. It is a fact that in this matter of confiscation of the *Mahar Watans*, Shahu had consulted Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who had not only advised favourably, but had insisted on implementation of the scheme. He was sure that the *Mahars* would not be freed of the shackles of social slavery without the annulment of the *Watans*. Later on, Babasaheb has put forth his views with solicitude in support of the confiscation of the *Mahar Watans*. He tried vehemently thrice in the Bombay Legislative Council between 1928 and 1940 to persuade the British Government to confiscate these *Watans*. But his efforts did not materialize. Even the B.G.Kher Government did not carry out the confiscation. The Morarji Desai Government was not expected to take such a step. Eventually Yashwantrao Chavan, a loyal follower of the traditions set by Shahu Maharaja and Babasaheb Ambedkar sequestered *Mahar Watans* and freed *Mahars* of social bondage.[15]

ABOLITION OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Now we turn towards the different measures Shahu employed for eradication of the custom of untouchability, a blemish on the whole of humanity. In order to eradicate untouchability from his State, Shahu made two declarations on January 1, 1919. The first related to the departments such as Revenue, Justice etc. It said, "In the State of Kolhapur, the revenue, judicial and other such officers shall treat the untouchable employees with affection and equality. If anyone does not wish to treat the untouchables in a manner mentioned above, he shall resign giving due notice within six weeks of the receipt of this order. He shall not be granted pension. It is our solemn wish that not a single person in our State shall be treated as a beast but everyone be treated as a human being.....Our officers shall follow the example of the missionaries, Arya Samajists, railway and (British) government officers in this regard."[16]

A declaration of a similar kind was approved for the Health Department of the State on the same day. Within a span of just fifteen days after this, a declaration abolishing untouchability in the Education Department was issued. However, the impact of these declarations was thought to be so potent that the officers of the State did not dare to publish them in the State Gazette. When Shahu came to know about this he took the officers to task and compelled them to Gazette the declarations. These declarations are worth reading in detail. Without going through them in detail, the intensity of Shahu's desire to eradicate untouchability could not be understood. The declaration of the health department says, "It has come to His Highness's notice that in the charitable hospitals the touchables and untouchables

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are accorded different treatments and the untouchables are not even allowed within the compound of the hospital. As the Government buildings are not bestowed as sanatoriums to any one (community), no one has any right to treat the untouchables with contempt. Rather the untouchables should be treated with utmost care. Charitable hospitals are meant for the poor and it would be appropriate to treat the poorest of poor, the untouchables, on equal terms. His Highness earnestly wishes that the State Medical Officers should follow the example of the Westerners, especially the American Mission of Miraj. When a patient, touchable or untouchable comes to the door he shall be treated with decency, examined and instead of being shoved out like an animal shall be sent into the hospital for treatment. If any officer has any objection to this procedure, he would better send his resignation within a period of six weeks from the receipt of this order. Of course, he shall not be awarded pension. Howsoever an officer might be tired, he is bound to look after a new patient; this rule applies to everyone, right from the topmost officer to the dresser and the nurse from the Medical Department. A copy of this order shall be given to each and every present and would-be employee of the Medical Department and one copy shall be hanged in the office of the hospital for regular use."[17]

In the declaration meant for the Education Department Shahu says, "His Highness has come to understand that touchables and untouchables are treated differently in the Education Department and that the untouchables are not allowed within the compound of the building of this department. As government buildings are not given for private enterprise no one has any right to treat the untouchables with contempt; rather they should be taken care of in all possible ways. Educational institutions are meant for poor people and it is only appropriate to treat the untouchables, the poorest of poor equally. If they pay taxes why should they be treated in a bad manner? His Highness earnestly desires that the private and government institutions of the school department, those which are granted or receive assistance in any form such as a building or a playground shall treat the untouchables with more respect and affection than the touchables. This is because the touchables can avail of other means to acquire education. No other means is within the reach of the untouchables. If the untouchables are not treated with equality, the teacher, irrespective of whether he is the principal or any other teacher of lower denomination shall be answerable and the assistance to the private institutions shall be cancelled."

"His highness desires that the Education Department shall not discriminate between the touchables and untouchables and follow the examples of the American Mission at Miraj, Saint Xavier College and Wilson college, the mission schools at Banglore and Panchgani, or the schools, colleges and *Gurukuls* of Arya Samaj that do not observe caste discrimination. If an untouchable student comes to any school that receives government aid, he shall be treated with respect like any other person and admitted into the school. If any employee does not wish to behave in this manner, he shall send his resignation within six weeks from the receipt of this order; such person of' course shall not be awarded pension. If the institution that receives assistance has objections, the *Darbar* shall annul the grant and assistance to such institution. Playgrounds, buildings or other movable and immovable properties allotted to such institutions by the State shall be taxed heavily...

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Raobahadur Dongre shall send a copy of this order to all the teachers of government as well as aided institutions." (23rd August 1919)[18]

In the month that followed, Shahu issued a declaration of eradication of untouchability for the general population: "No caste pollution customs or touch taboo involving any human being shall be observed in public places such as all public buildings, charitable rest houses, government buildings meant for distribution of charitable food, circuit house, etc. and rivers and public wells."- (6 September 1919)[19]

The officers were apprehensive that once these declarations were gazetted, there would occur a general discontent and clamour among the people that would lead to disruption. However, Shahu had grasped the nerve of public opinion. He was sure that his deeds and thoughts had awakened his people enough on the issue of abolition of untouchability and with determination aimed his missile of declarations to destroy the pernicious custom of untouchability.

VIEWS ON UNTOUCHABILITY

It is illuminating to note the views of national organizations and leaders on the issue of untouchablity at a time when the Kolhapur State had launched a deadly fusillade against this Malicious social evil through a number of measures, strategies, laws and regulations. We cannot justly evaluate the significance of Chhatrapati Shahu's contribution in isolation of general sentiments in the country. A couple of contemporary social events would give an idea in which way the wind blew.

The first incident concerns the Central Legislative Council in Delhi when Manekji Dadabhoy, a Moderate elected from the constituency of Central Province-Berar, tabled a resolution in March 1916 seeking liberation of untouchables.[20] In his address on this resolution, Dadabhoy said, "To struggle incessantly towards the betterment of the untouchables is a moral responsibility of the Government and the Hindu people. It is a blemish on them that they do not step forward to fulfil their duty." He suggested a number of ways and means for amelioration of the untouchables. That time, great national leaders like Surendranath Banerjee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya were members of the Council. Their response was cool. Both argued during the debate on the resolution that though it was true that the problem of untouchability was a religious and social one and Hindus should take lead in resolving it, to hold the Hindus alone guilty would be unfair. Their problem could be dealt with only when a favourable change in public opinion on untouchability occured and that would take a long time.[21]

Another incident concerns the Indian National Congress that struggled for the right of political freedom for the Indians. Its leaders professed that they were the representatives of all the Indian people and claimed that the Congress was the supreme forum for expression of Indian opinion. Maharshi Vitthal Ramji shinde had been incessantly trying for ten years to get a resolution passed condemning the practice of untouchability and abolition of that custom. However, the leaders of the Congress were not ready to accept the resolution on such a burning social issue on the ground that it would hurt the sentiments of caste Hindus within the party. Consequently, Shinde's resolution continued to lapse each year. Finally, it was approved in the year 1917 at the Calcutta session under the presidency of the great humanitarian Dr. Annie Bezant.[22] Its credit

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should be given equally to Dr. Bezant and Shinde.

The third incident occurred in March 1918. This was the 'First Untouchability Abolition Convention' in Bombay organized by Maharshi Shinde and presided over by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda. It was held on the backdrop of the impending Montford reforms. Lokmanya Tilak was present. Justice Sir Narayanrao Chandavarkar was the Chairman of Reception Committee.. Among the other dignitaries present were Bipin Chandra Pal, Vitthalbhai Patel, C.V.Mehata, Barristar Jaykar, Dadasaheb Khaparde, Thakkar Bappa etc. Many of them addressed the convention. Lokmanya's address became the most famous. He said: "....The issue of the untouchables is one of utmost importance and it should be put to an end politically and socially at the earliest. The problem can be solved..... The concept that the touch of a human being is sinful and its shadow causes pollution must be totally destroyed. This discrimination is a reality today; But to begin to wipe it out and finally abolition of this discrimination will harbinger new reforms. This is going to be the most critical religious reform.....this is a task for the whole country. There is no discrimination at the doors of God between caste Hindus on the one hand and the Untouchables, Chandals, Shudras on the other. Embracing them would not be defiance of His command. We should carry along the untouchables in the national and social missions. This task has now become inevitable and cannot be ignored. I must make it plain that I am not against untouchables. In my opinion, untouchability must be put to an end. It is a custom that must be destroyed."[23]

However, Shinde soon experienced that this spirited speech of Tilak was but a hollow roar of a lion for public consumption. The leaders signed a declaration at the end of the convention which reflected the clear sentiment of the gathering favouring abolition of untouchability. When Shinde requested Tilak for his signature, he refused saying, "I do not think I can take this additional responsibility in view of my total preoccupation today."[24]

The Shankaracharya of the Karveer Peetha had sent a message to the convention in which on the problem of untouchability he had said, "We will find out a way in consultation with heads of other religious seats without flouting the necessary commands of ancient sacred texts." However, the language he used signified nothing. The Shankaracharya of the Dwarka seat, one of the other religious seats to whom he was supposed to consult to find out a solution, had already sent a wire to the convention that referred Maharaja Sayajirao and Shinde as the Satans of modern times and deplored the convention![25]

In fact, the apathy of the Indian leaders towards the problem of untouchability was the reason why the British Government had not been able to make laws abolishing untouchability. To eradicate untouchability legally, the country had to wait until independence. After independence, Article 17 of the Indian Constitution that came into effect in 1950 abolished untouchability. Later in 1955, Parliament passed the special enactment to eradicate untouchability. Shahu had accomplished that feat some three decades earlier in his State. The country had to wait long even after independence.

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11.

SALVATION OF UNTOUCHABLES : DIRECT ACTION

The abolition of untouchability was but one part of Shahu's mission of deliverance of the untouchables. To that effect, he issued appropriate ordinances and declarations from time to time. He was not one to sit idle over such declarations. He was an active reformer. He followed the principles espoused in the declaration in practice and employed untouchables in his private and state services, got rid of untouchability, and compelled others to follow suit. While doing this he saw to it that self-confidence and self-pride was infused in them.

THE MAHAR TALATHI

In the military services of the State, people belonging to the Maratha and similar castes were a major proportion. In 1917, Shahu appointed four untouchables in his Military Department. Two of those were *Mahar* by caste and two were *Maang*.[1] To employ the untouchables in other government services as well, Shahu issued a special order on August 5, 1918, thus: "....It has been ordered that the people of the untouchable castes be appointed to the posts of *Talathi*. Those among such appointees who shine owing to their diligence and intelligence shall later be appointed to the posts of section clerks and head clerk."[2]

Shahu had abrogated the *Kulkarni Watan* in his State and started the practice of appointing *Talathi* as in British India. To appoint members of the backward castes, especially the untouchables to these posts, he started coaching classes to train untouchables in *talathi* work and awarded special scholarships to such candidates. To facilitate preferential appointment of trained untouchables *Talathis*, Shahu issued a special order. It said: "....*Talathis* are being appointed these days. The people belonging to the untouchable castes shall be accorded preference in making such appointments. In the same way, if these people deserve they shall be appointed to any post of merit in the Darbar meaning the post of even the head of departments such as Revenue, Judiciary, Police, or General. Let it be announced that henceforth the pretext of their untouchability shall not be entertained" (8th August, 1918.).[3] A similar order was issued the next year. It said, "As far as possible the *Talathi* be appointed of the caste whose population is in majority. People

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belonging to the untouchable castes such as *Mahar, Maang, Chambar* etc. be given preference to the maximum possible extent. There shall be at least five untouchable appointments per *Peth* and three per *Mahal.*"[4] (26th August, 1919). In a village, the *Kulkarni* had a position next only to the Patil. Now, *Talathi* replaced *Kulkarni* and untouchables began to be appointed as *Talathi.* The *Mahar* whose forefathers would not dare sit on the steps of the village office, now, out of the kind mercies of Shahu, began to sit in the company of the village Patil! The *Mahar Talathi,* who hitherto was used to begging mercy feebly as "*Johar Mai-Baap*" (meaning I bow before my mother and father)now began to be greeted with respect and conventional greeting "Ram!Ram!" from none others than his previous masters, the Maratha populace! We cannot even imagine how radical was this social change that Shahu had ushered in more than seven decades ago. This was not just a simple social change. It was a social revolution!

Shahu is seen appointing some untouchables in the revenue department as *Daptarband** while some as police. In 1920, while appointing 16 *Mahars* to the police gate of the city he asserted that he was doing it to elevate the position of these people in society.[5]

CHAIRMAN OF MUNICIPALITY

One untouchable was appointed in the office of the Kolhapur Municipality for the first time; it did not stop here. An untouchable-Dattoba Powar- was appointed the Chairman of the Municipality with Shahu's encouragement. This was not only an outstanding event by the standards of that time - a *Mahar* chairman of the municipal body? Unheard, unimaginable! - but perhaps the first of its kind in the whole of India. Shahu himself took much pride in this occurrence. In a letter to Maharshi Shinde in 1921, Shahu writes, "You may come here when I am in Kolhapur. This present Chairperson of the Kolhapur Municipality comes from an untouchable caste. There is a clerk, Vhatkar, working on a salary of Rs. 20 in the Municipality. He belongs to an untouchable caste. Untouchables and non-Brahmins have obtained such chances as communal representation has been awarded to them. The untouchables were harassed and isolated by Brahmins on the point of sanitation; that situation no longer exists now. Therefore, I do hope you would visit and have a look at the situation.[6]

By the end of Shahu's reign, the *Bhangi* (scavenger) community is also seen to have entered jobs in municipal office. A record of the appointment of one Heera Madar Bhangi as a member on a Municipal Committee by Shahu is available.[7]

Because of lack of spread of education, it was next to impossible to find educated persons among the untouchables. Even so, Shahu absorbed many untouchables in different departments without much fuss about education. Untouchable people began working as government servants in different areas such as the horse stables, elephant care, hunting and the Post and Telegraph department. Some were appointed as *Mahouts* and some as coachmen or drivers of the royal family. In 1908, in the marriage procession of Princess Akkasaheb, the handsome untouchable

* A subordinate officer whose duty was to take out and again to put in the daily office records and to open and close the office.

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coachmen that rode the horses and carts with swords hanging by their waists and the *Mahouts* that rode the regal elephants dressed in stately attire had increased the prestige of the untouchable community. It was nothing less than a social revolution.

A SOCIAL LABORATORY

The Sontali camp (Rajputwadi) of the King was like a laboratory to carry out such novel social experiments. By employing the untouchables in his service in this camp, Shahu had set an example of eradication of untouchability before the society. One undated narration of Shahu is available in which he says, ".....At Rajputwadi daily worship to 38 Gods and Goddesses such as *Margai* and others, all the *Pirs* and the Gajendralaxmi is offered by a *Mahar* named Ganu. All the people from the Camp including the King himself offer prayers to these gods. In case a marriage occurs, processions go to these deities to seek blessings. On the water reservoir there, everyone except the *Bhangi* is allowed, the practice of touch taboo is out of vogue, and the fun in the Camp is that all people live amidst brotherly affection. Dashratha *Maang* has been appointed as *Jamdar* of the hunting store. Aba Maang and Chanda *Mahar* are *Kaamdars* of the Hunt department. Dadu Mahar and Ramu Mahar, the residents of Radhanagri, are *Mahouts* on the elephants and serve the elephants that participate in Friday Processions of Godesses *Ambabai*, a tradition continued from Shivaji the Great, the founder of the royal era, to Shivaji IV. These 'untouchable' employees are not prohibited from touching the holy feet of goddesses *Ambabai* and the *padukas** of Shivaji the Great. In the same way many people (untouchables) are in the service of different grades such as clerk, *Talathi*, police etc...The *Hajeri* required of the *Suryawamshi* and *Somwanshi* people (Mahar sub-castes) has been revoked by an order and their admission into all free schools facilitated by another order. Even if the school assembles in a *Maruti* temple, (their) admission is made mandatory. How can a human being defile God? How can it be a God's command that this person should be thought as polluting and this, not? It cannot be!..Yallappa Bala Naik, the driver of His Highness' car, is a *Mahar*. His *Chabukswar*** Dashratha and a few coachmen are also *Mahars*. Where for some time they also perform the tasks of a valet; what else remains? During hunting bouts, Chandra, Aba, Dashratha also double as valets; a routine affair and nothing strange." [8]

BOLSTERING OF CONFIDENCE

Shahu was greatly fond of hunting. In hunting troupe, he had employed many untouchables. He had about two hundred ferocious hunter dogs of various Indian and foreign breed. Specially to look after this legion he had appointed young men from the *Maang* community. On special occasions, the King would adroitly demonstrate the skills and abilities that these untouchable employees possessed. Bahskarrao Jadhav has described one such function arranged in the Miss Clark Hostel: "....The Maharaja organized a grand ceremony at the Miss Clark Hostel, where the Political Agent presided. The ceremony was conducted in a majestic way. The King escorted the political agent in a postillion coach driven by four stallions. The two

*An impression of a foot on stone, worshiped as the trace of some god or ancestor.
**A horse breaker; a rough rider.

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postillions were *Mahars* by caste. Carting horses was a job that required much skill. A retinue was stood outside the palace to welcome the guests. It comprised of elephants. Their *Mahouts* and *Gadekari* were 'untouchables'. *Maang* youths stood uniformed with the leashed hunting hounds. A phalanx of untouchable men holding falcons on was among the reception group. The cheetah carts too were manned by them. Every person belonging to the untouchable community was feeling that it was his ceremony. They and the others realized that given the right opportunity, proper training, and encouragement they had the capability of performing any small and big tasks. It bolstered their confidence."[9]

Some surnames of the 'untouchable' clearly indicated their caste while other names provided a fair indication of their 'untouchability'. It caused trouble for them on many occasions. For example, some promising wrestlers had come of age among this community on Shahu's encouragement. Quite often, the wrestlers from outside the State would participate in wrestling tournaments in Kolhapur. Names of the wrestlers were announced before the bouts commenced. To hide the caste of untouchable wrestlers from the competitors and aficionados of wrestling, Shahu had devised a novel trick. Gangaram Kamble, an untouchable himself tells of this trick, " ...The Maharaja tried all possible ways to uplift the untouchable community and to get rid of the feeling of inferiority they nursed. How involved he was in this task and how minutely he thought about everything would be revealed in a following story:

"The names such as *Bhangi, Mahar, Chambhar* are ridden with untouchability. To get rid of this stigma, Shahu had accorded new names to wrestlers of these castes. To call *Mahar* wrestlers to get ready for the bout, the official would announce loudly, 'Jat wrestlers, get ready.' Similarly, the *Bhangis* were referred to as Sardars while the *Chambhars* were called Pundits. As such, the combatants of the other castes never would get the slightest idea that he was contesting against a *Mahar, Bhangi* or *Chambar* wrestler. Otherwise the untouchables would have hardly found a contestant of any other caste to wrestle with."[10]

To the poor children belonging to the untouchable community who were deeply interested in learning, Shahu provided all facilities and brought sunshine to their lives.. At Islampur, a *Mahar* boy, Dnyandev Dhruvnath Gholap, was trying to quench thirst of education sitting outside the class of a Brahmin teacher. Satyashodhak worker Bhaurao Patil saw the scene, fought with the teacher, and brought the boy to Shahu at Kolhapur. Shahu arranged for his learning. The boy was intelligent enough to complete higher education. Eventually, he entered the Legislative Council of Bombay Presidency as the first elected representative of the untouchables! This Dnynandev Gholap was among the first group of associates in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's public life.[11]

The other example relates to a boy named Krishnaji Laxman More, belonging to the *Maang* community. His urge for learning was so compulsive that one day he mustered courage to meet Shahu directly at the Sontali Camp and bowed before him respectfully. Shahu roared, "Who are you?" Krishnji folded his hands and said humbly, "I am a Maang. I want to learn school." Shahu was impressed by his

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courage and love for learning. 'Come tomorrow', He roared again. Next day the King himself carried Krishnaji in a cart to the Gurukul, the Arya Samaj School where he arranged for Krishnaji's learning and boarding. This boy later grew into a well-educated man and made it great - he was privileged to become the member of the Parliament twice. Krishnaji More himself narrated his astounding experience thus[12] ".....How it occured to me to announce before the Rajarshi, 'I am a Maang. I want to learn school'.....! And the way the Maharaja ordered 'come tomorrow.....!' The memory thrills me. And low, the event culminates into my admission in the Gurukul within twenty-four hours...! On the face of it the episode appears simple. From the Maharaja's point of view, this incidence is like a drop in the ocean, because he had made many an individual's life just the way he made mine. As such, for him this was just a minor chore out of millions. For others too, this may seem to be an insignificant event,"[13] As stated by More, Shahu had weeded the thorns and spikes out of many an untouchable's life and blossomed the gardens of their lives.

A BLAST OF DYNAMITE

In those times, even a passing touch of an untouchable was regarded as *Vital**. The rituals of purification after this 'pollution' such as bathing and washing polluted clothes, were observed not by Brahmins alone but also by the Marathas and such other castes. In such an orthodox society with rigid social and religious customs, Shahu's action of publicly accepting food at the hands of untouchables was like a blast of dynamite exlopding the very foundations of untouchability.

During his address at the untouchbles' conference at Mangaon he publicly requested Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar to have meals with him and accordingly arranged a grand function of his felicitation and meals at the Sontali Camp. Many activists from the non-Brahmin communities and the Satyashodhak folk were present at the function.[14] They could not help being influenced by this incident. Later at Nagpur, a conference of the ostracized, 'All India Bahishkrit Convention' was held. Shahu was accorded the honor of presiding over the convention. During the proceedings, in the very presence of the leaders of different castes such as Brahmins and Marathas, Shahu deliberately took tea at the hands of an untouchable.[15] The very next month the foundation of the building for untouchable hostel was laid by him at Nasik. He took tea at the hands of an untouchable in the presence of thousands of people at that function as well. He repeated this action at Tasgaon.[16]

The story of Gangaram Kamble in Shahu's times has acquired historical fame. Gangaram was a horse keeper in the government stable. One day he touched the water reservoir meant exclusively for the Marathas. When Marathas came to know about it they beat him hard until he began to bleed. Shahu was in Delhi then. On his return, Gangaram sought his audience with his untouchable brethren, showed the King the bloody marks of injuries from the beating and asked for justice. On hearing Gangaram's story, Shahu was enraged. He summoned the Maratha culprits and lashed their backs with a horse-whip. They were

*A local term used for pollution caused by physical contact with 'impure' castes or women in menses.

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not spared because they were Marathas, his caste brothers. He told Gangaram, 'Go. You are absolved of the service. Start a business of your own and ask for whatever help you need from me."[17]

The same Gangaram, encouraged by Shahu later started a hotel named 'Satyasudharak Hotel' on the main road in Kolhapur. Shahu's horse-cart now began to halt before Gangaram's hotel every time he went out for a drive. Sitting in the coach, Shahu would order tea from Gangaram's hotel with a resounding roar. Not only would Maharaja drink the tea that Gangaram bought in a tray with great respect but also offer it to the people of different castes such as Brahmins, Marathas etc. in the cart. How could any one dare to refuse the tea offered by the King himself and who drank it with great taste?[18]

Shahu revolutionized Gangaram Kamble's life. Gangaram later became a respected leader of the untouchable community and a confidant activist of Shahu. After the King's demise, he became a loyal follower of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in his struggle for the liberation of the untouchables and worked on that front in Kolhapur State. Gangaram's one more achievement should be noted. Three years after Maharaja's demise, he formed a group from among his Mahar community to raise a monument in the his memory and in 1925 built the Shahu Maharaja Memorial in Kolhapur. This was the first memorial of Shahu not only in Kolhapur, but in the whole of India, and that too built by the Mahar community![19] A few days ago, the people of Kolhapur have raised a pillar in the memory of Gangaram at the spot of his Satyasudharak Hotel to commemorate his work.

Shahu also included members of the royal family in his programmes of publicly accepting food at the hands of untouchables. Gangaram Kamble has narrated a reminiscence about one such programme: "The Maharaja had gone to Shirol for a hunt. He ordered the *Mahars* of Shirol to arrange tea for the entourage at their *Takkya*.* To go to their homes and have meals or even some snacks is a great leap forward than just allowing them into one's home. Moreover, the Shahu did not go to their settlement alone but made them arrange a *'Haldi-'kumkum'* function** for women. He took with him Ranisaheb, Princesses Akkasaheb and Indumatidevi to the *Mahar* neighbourhood, had the *Mahar* women apply 'kumkum' on their foreheads and encouraged Indumatidevi to speak a few words on the occasion. Everyone accompanying had to have tea at the hands of the so-called untouchables. The whole Shirol village was greatly influenced by the incident. Some saviors of the untouchables began to crop up only to appease Shahu. Such self-serving pretense too proved useful to the society."[20] The entire royal family of Kolhapur goes to the *Mahar* settlement and has tea with them....it was an incredible image in the India of those times. It was certainly an event Gods should be envy of!

A KING OF THE DHEDS !

The way Shahu enquired with special affection about the untouchable people and their leaders who came to meet him is illustrated in the biography of Akkaji

* A meeting place of Mahars in village.
** The ceremony of presenting termeric powder to husband-having ladies upon some religious occasions.

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Gavai, a leader of the untouchables from Vidarbha. Gavai and his associates came to Kolhapur to invite Shahu to the convention of Akhil Bharatiya Bahishkrit Samaj to be held at Nagpur. They stayed in a Boarding. As soon as Shahu heard of their arrival, he sent a special officer and brought them to a government guesthouse. He sent Saytashodhak activists Ganptrao Kadam and Baburao Yadav to join them at the daily meals. One day he brought them to the Sonthali camp and accorded them a royal banquet in his own company. In the conversation when the topic of the convention was mentioned, Shahu asked, "Why don't you invite Lokmanya Tilak in my place?" Gavai replied, "Not only Lokmanya Tilak but even the men like Shri Ramchandra of the Hindus, regarded as the incarnation of God, have not been favourable towards the betterment of we pariahs. When it comes to behaving with us their policy appears to have become irreligious. Sorry for being outspoken, but that is why we have approached you." Touched, Shahu said, "Doesn't matter even if I lose my kingdom; I will certainly do whatever possible for you."[21] After Gavai went away, Shahu wrote to him an affectionate letter. In that he says, "You came to Karveer without invitation, thought of it as it were your own home, and met with us. Such behaviour is not possible of anyone but a true well-wisher friend. I was very happy at your conduct, so affectionate and like a kin. Henceforth you think of Karveer as your home and let us keep on meeting. I shall be really happy if we do".[22] Shahu treated untouchables with genuine affection . It was no wonder then that the sense of obligation of the untouchables towards Shahu was sky high.

On the King's arrival in Nagpur the untouchable community accorded him a grand welcome and took him in a huge procession. People showered him with flowers and chanted slogans for his victory. On the previous day, the champions of racial superiority in order to derogate and condemn Shahu had pasted wall posters all over Nagpur that described him as king of the *Dheds (Mahars)*. Raghujirao Bhonsle, the Prince of Nagpur himself did not approve of Shahu's presence at the Convention. He left Nagpur just to spite Shahu! The untouchables were furious at the racist insult . To calm them down Shahu said, "....Though they have tried to scoff at me by calling me the king of *Dheds*, I do not consider it as my insult. It is an honour for me."[23] Dr. Ambedkar was also present at this conference.

To attend the meetings and conferences of untouchables, mix with them freely and accept food at their hands might seem insignificant today. But these were acts of great courage in those times. Appasaheb Dadgonda Patil, the social worker who had organized the Mangaon conference, was ostracized not only by the people of his religion, the Jains but also by the entire village. Patil was banned from entering the Jain temple in the village. Even the village barbers and washer men had ostracized him. Finally, when the matter reached Shahu, he threatened the caste people with imprisonment. Only then did they relent and admitted Patil back into the fold.[24] The people who ostracized and tormented him were non-Brahmins, which speaks of the prevailing mindset of the society in general towards untouchables in those times. Also, it becomes explicitly clear that in his struggle against untouchability, Shahu did not spare even the non-Brahmins whenever the need occurred.

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12.

SALVATION OF UNTOUCHABLES - IDEOLOGY AND GUIDANCE

Now we turn to the thoughts Chhatrapati Shahu expressed as regards salvation of untouchables and his guidance on the issue. His thinking is well articulated in his personal letters written to different people from time to time and in the addresses, he delivered at many meetings and conferences.

In a letter to a close friend, the retired Governor of Bombay Lord Sydenham in June 1918, Shahu says, "Really, to strive for the betterment of these millions of dumb subjects is such a duty that may appear to be fruitless. However, it has to be fulfilled generously offering many sacrifices. My only purpose in doing this is to help out the helpless, orphans, ignorant and the downtrodden."[1] Here, it should be noted that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was yet to arrive on the scene as the leader of the untouchables. Shahu was extremely unhappy that the untouchables had no leader of their own to voice their grievances . When he saw the highly educated Ambedkar for the first time he was delighted that the untouchables had finally found their natural leader.

BRAHMINOCRACY DESTROYED SELF-RESPECT OF UNTOUCHABLES

Eventually, Shahu and Dr. Ambedkar had increasing interactions and they corresponded frequently and deliberated on their mission to abolish the stigma of untouchability.. In one of the letters around 1920, Shahu expressed his dismay that the untouchable community had lost dignity and self-respect. He says, "These days the spirit of all untouchables, especially the *Mahars* has vanished! They do not have even a semblance of self-respect. The realization that they are not treated as humans and their condition is worst than beasts is far away from them. In such a condition, how could it trouble their minds? What is the reason behind this? I have come to conclusion after deep thinking that it is so because there is nobody to educate them. If at all someone worth the name shows the will, there is no readiness to accept it. During my stay at Shirol, I called all *Mahars* to my bungalow and even took them for a ride in my car; but they would not understand its meaning. 'No, no... don't come closer,' they said perturbed. As if I had

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committed a great crime in calling them near. And again, what is the reason? It is the extremely tyrannical, despotic bureaucracy of the Brahmins and their laws![2]

Shahu felt that the centuries-old hegemony of the oppressive Brahmindom had destroyed the values such as dignity, self-respect and self-confidence among the untouchable communities. He was trying to reform them and rekindle these values in them. One such effort was granting of *Sanads (charters)* to the untouchables to practice law. The Brahmin class caused much hue and cry over these charters. There was no reaction when similar *Sanads* were issued to Brahmins and other higher classes. In the address to the Nagpur Convention, Shahu says, "When the *Mahars and Mangs* who had passed matriculation or were well trained in English were brought in the higher professions, the Brahmin community was very much annoyed. If these *Mahars* and *Maangs* had been converted to Christianity, my act would not be criticized. Many high caste individuals, inferior in education and intellect to these 'untouchable' are licensed to practice law in many Indian States. How come the society does not feel degraded in those cases.....My objective in giving such *Sanads* was to open to the untouchables the professions that were hitherto prohibited to them because of either custom, law or intimidation, and thus improve their conditions and instil a realization and confidence among them that they too were as good as anyone else."[3]

The Rajarshi felt that along with the material bondages of the untouchables, their mental slavery should also be destroyed and for that to happen self-confidence needed to be instilled in them.. He took the opportunity of infusing such confidence in them through many addresses he delivered at various meetings and conferences. At the Nagpur Convention, while boosting the self-respect and confidence of the untouchables he says, "...It is extremely degrading to prefix the word untouchable to anyone...you are not untouchables. You are the constituent parts of this Indian Nation, more intelligent, more gallant, more thoughtful, more self-sacrificing, than many of those who regard you untouchable. I do not regard you untouchable. You should take to business now with a belief that we are equal brothers, if not more; our rights are definitely equal."[4]

In a meeting at Nashik, Shahu has said that untuochability was a hideous offshoot of the shameful practice of caste discrimination not found anywhere else in the world. He says, "....In no religion anywhere in the world discrimination based on birth is practised the way it is practised in our religion. It discriminates between people as high and low based on birth. The most heinous form of these distinctions is seen in the treatment the other castes accord to you. How very shameful it is to call you untouchables and treat in a manner worse than cats, pigs and dogs are treated when you are our brothers!"[5]

In March 1918, while addressing a conference organized by Maharshi Shinde, Lokmnya Tilak had said, "....The problem of untouchables must be resolved at the earliest. However this problem sometimes impedes other much graver issues and that should be avoided."[6] The graver problem referred to by Lokmanya was the problem of Swarajya. He was connoting that the movement of deliverance of the

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untouchables should not hinder the movement of attaining *Swarajya*. The above statement of Tilak was indicative of the attitude of the higher classes striving for political independence to consider social issues like untouchability as of secondary importance. Shahu was opposed to such attitude. He says, "Many ask in what way is politics related to untouchability? We shall admit if indeed there is no relation. But I say, how would you engage in political affairs unless you treat untouchables like humans? The ones who are to pursue politics should treat humans as humans the way they are treated in other countries. How could the country be served unless such treatment is furnished? And only the one who accords such treatment could be said to have served the country. No one else."[7]

While sincerely requesting the Brahmins to abjure caste distinctions and untouchability which degrade the society and inflame hatred, Shahu says, "Love increases out of love and hatred out of hatred. Even if a beast is treated with love, it gives love in return. I am a sportsman. I brought a cheetah from Africa and left it in a jungle two hundred miles from Kolhapur. It came from over there searching for its master! The same cheetah, if it were treated cruelly, would have run away and attacked people. Do not our leaders comprehend this? How could calling others lowly or untouchables make them great?"[8]

"YOUR LEADER SHOULD BELONG TO YOUR CASTE"

Shahu has expressed the idea in his correspondence and speeches many times that in the movement for liberation of the untouchables, they should, instead of accepting leadership of a higher caste person, create the leadership from amongst themselves and seek progress on the principles of self-reliance. In a letter written to Sitaram Shivtarkar, untouchable activist and an associate of Dr.Ambedkar, Shahu has succinctly elaborated this thought. He writes, "...One who depends on others, is sure to be drowned! The one who fights his way, shall achieve the best!! Such are my opinions. You must consult and take the opinions of the Maharaja of Baroda or the Nizam of Hyderabad or Chandavarkar or Shinde including myself but must not think of them (or me) as your leader. The leader ought to belong to your *Somwamshi* caste....others you should not take as leaders, but only as advisers. The moment you accord such a person your leadership, he will look for himself. He will threaten you that if you do not follow him, he would have no relation with you, that he would not write on your behalf, never raise a question for you in the Legislative Council, never talk to the Government about you; he would enslave you once again for sure! Even the beasts do not accept the leadership of anyone outside their breed. Then why should men? Never does a pig lead the flock of deer nor ever does a deer lead the pigs. Never are ducks leaders in a flock of pigeons and never do crows lead the group of ducks. Then why there be a person of a different caste to lead a group of people? The reason in short is that once such leadership is accepted the folks transform into herd of sheep or cattle. What is the destiny of the poor sheep whose leader is a *Dhangar* (shepherd)? To lay their lives for their leader. Such a destiny is but natural when the leadership belongs to a different caste. From where would the bracing of the deer come? If Brahmins want to assume our leadership, they should first give up caste

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discrimination with food, and marriage taboos. Only then would we accept them as leaders. Otherwise, people like me would remain aloof and assist only as far as possible with funds and counsel. I am going to provide funds and counsel to only those who will consult whoever they want but act only as they think right. I do not approve of maintaining any relations with people who depend on other castes just like sheep and cows and oxen..." - (September 1919).[9] The Rajarshi had strived so much for deliverance of the untouchables that it was not difficult for him to assume their leadership in entirety. However, whatever work he had done for their betterment was in a selfless manner for one, and secondly, he genuinely felt that their leader should invariably belong to their caste.

Shahu regarded the deliverance of all non-Brahmin lay masses with the untouchables as the prime motive of his life. In the last six years of his life, he created a huge commotion in Maharashtra by vehemently supporting the *Satyashodhak* and the non-Brahmin movements. Especially as the *Satyashodhak Jalsa* (folk theatre)movement was inspired by him. Brahmin-Non-Brahmin conflict acquired a sharp edge in many places. At some places where Brahmin youths objected to the performance of *jalsas* social tension rose. The British Government was keenly watching this movement. It had no objection in Shahu's deliverance of the lay folks to any extent he desired in his State, but it wished that he should not participate nor extend his support to the movements outside his realm. As the Chhatrapati was a vassal ruler, he had to obtain prior permission of the Bombay Government to participate in the meetings and conferences outside his state. Many times the Government would hesitate. At times, it would express its displeasure. Such displeasure in a way would be an indirect bullying of sorts. *Prabodhankar* Thackeray, in his memoirs, narrates Shahu's fitting reply to one such intimidating dispatch received from the British Government in 1922: "....The salvation of all the backward masses of Maharashtra including the untouchables is the pious cause of my life. How does the Government speak of political rights without improving the religious and economic conditions of millions of farmer, worker, and labourer brethren? To whom would you give rights? Who would receive? And what would the ignorant non-Brahmins make of that right and how would they benefit? I know well who is the instigator and mastermind behind the disguised threats of dethronement the Government is hurling at me. Before you depose me I would happily resign from the throne. But never shall this Shahu forswear the movement of the non-Brahmins that he has taken upon him."[10]

SHAHU - 'OUR ABRAHAM LINCOLN'

Dr. Y.D. Phadke has stated at one place that among the Marathas, Shahu and Maharshi Shinde were the only two who had real compassion for the untouchables.[11] Maharshi Shinde himself was impressed by the effort of Shahu for amelioration of the untouchables. In 1921, in a letter to Shahu he writes, "It is common knowledge that Your Highness has been putting incredible efforts for the betterment of the untouchables. For his mission, I am equally obliged as much as they (the untouchables) are or even more to Your Highness. I would be pleased to come and witness for myself (Your Highness' accomplishments)."[12]

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Dhananjaya Keer, while describing the extent of reverential sentiments the untouchables had for the work of Shahu for their salvation, says, "....Because of his outstanding love and dedication the classes regarded as backward and untouchable treated him like God. They worshipped him as their saviour the same way they worshipped Gautam Buddha, Mahatma Phule and Ambedkar!".[13]

That this statement is not exaggerated is proved by the obituary that Ganesh Akkaji Gavai wrote in *Bahishkrit Bharat* on Shahu's demise. He writes, ".... The Almighty had blessed our Bhagwan Shahu Chatrapati with outstanding strength. With it, he totally removed the curse of untouchability that blemished our ill-fated class. A class of those who, in the name of religion acquired the disposition of irredeemable slavery, who grew into mental slaves out of ignorance, and who became more pitiable than even the beasts because of untouchability and whose untouchability could not be eradicated by a single noble soul over thousands of years, was retrieved back into humanity by Bhagwaan Shahu Chatrapati."[14] In the same article, honouring Shahu's efforts for eradication of untouchability he has addressed him as 'Our Abraham Lincoln'!

This mission of amelioration of the untouchables, undertaken by Mahatma Phule and Rajarshi Shahu was later assumed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and he became the great leader of the untouchables from all over India. Expressing deep gratitude for Shahu, Ambedkar says, "the untouchables never have had a friend like Shahu Maharaja and we doubt will ever have one?"[15] What other fitting honour of the yeomen services that Shahu rendered for the oppressed can be sited?

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13.

SHAHU AND AMBEDKAR

The meeting between Shahu Maharaja and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and their association that followed was an unprecedented event in the history of modern Maharashtra. Unfortunately for Maharashtra and India, this collaboration did not last long. It came to an end with Shahu's premature demise.

Ambedkar went to America on a scholarship awarded by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda-(1913). He acquired an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the Columbia University and went over to London for an M.Sc and a Bar at Law. However, he had to return as the Baroda Government refused to increase the term of his scholarship-(1917). He immediately had to go and join the service of the Baroda State according to the stipulation of the scholarship. However, the stigma of untouchability made it almost impossible for him to find a residence in Baroda. He began to be persistently derogated in the office as a pariah. Not even Maharaja Sayajirao could help Babasaheb caught as he was between the pangs of insult and mental torture. As a result, he helplessly gave up the job and returned to Mumbai.[1]

THE FIRST MEETING

Shahu must have heard of Dr. Ambedkar during this period around 1918. Shahu was extremely delighted to know that a young man from the *Mahar* community had returned from abroad with so high academic qualifications and he intensely desired to see this young man. The biographer of Dr. Ambedkar, Changdev Khairmode, has said that, a learned activist from the depressed class Dattoba Powar of Kolhapur was acquainted with Ambedkar and he was the one who first told Shahu of him.[2] Keer says that this same Powar brought about a meeting between Shahu and Ambedkar.[3] Khairmode has mentioned 1920 as the year of this meeting.

However, Bhai Madhavrao Bagal has mentioned in his memoirs that the encounter was arranged by Dattoba Dalvi and not Dattoba Powar. Of course, Dalvi himself had told about this meeting to Bagal. Dalvi was an accomplished artist in the good books of Shahu. On Shahu's suggestion, Dalvi told Babasaheb that the Maharaja was interested in meeting

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him and later in due time the meeting took place, according to Bhai Bagal.[4] It is possible that this meeting might have taken place in 1919 and not in 1920 as Khairmode avers. Because, Ambedkar's fortnightly journal *Muknayak*, originally financed by Shahu, began its publication in January 1920. It is logical that the two had met before, exchanged ideas on the untouchables' movement, and decided to start some journal for its furtherance. Khairmode himself has said that a delegation of untouchable activists under the aegis of Ambedkar had called on Shahu in Bombay in 1919 to consult him about the proposed chronicle favourable to the movement.[5] A meeting between the two might have occurred before the meeting of this delegation. The scholars, Dr. Gangadhar Pantavne and Prof. Dhammapal Ratnakar have considered the year 1919 as more likely.[6]

MOOKNAYAK AND MANGAON CONFERENCE

Ambedkar's motive in bringing out the journal was to create an awakening in the ostracized society that had remained dumb folded for centuries and of leading its emancipation. He had named it as *Muknayak*, a title that spoke volumes. Officially, one of his associates was its editor; but the motivating spirit and editorial control was that of Ambedkar. He would pen even the editorials in the beginning. It is sad to note that the editor of *Kesari* had refused to publish even a paid advertisement of the first issue of the *Muknayak*.[7] Earlier in 1918, Lokmanya Tilak had expressed surprisingly unorthodox views on untouchability at the first untouchability conference in Mumbai .But *Kesari*, not suprisingly, had not published a word of it.[8] Thus, it refused to welcome the *Muknayak* even in the form of an advertisement. On this backdrop, the helping hand that Shahu had extended towards this *Muknayak* right from the start was his natural reaction. Documentary evidence is available that such assistance was available to the journal from Shahu from time to time.[9]

Ambedkar came in close contact with Shahu at the conference held in Mangaon in the State of Kolhapur at Shahu's initiative and he specially found time to attend it. Ambedkar was the chairman. The Rajarshi was happy that the untouchable community had found an excellent leader in the person of Babasaheb. Expressing his delight Shahu said, "You have discovered your true leader and I heartily congratulate you for that. I am sure Dr. Ambedkar would not falter from bringing about your redemption. A time will come when he shall be the leader of the whole of India. My inner voice tells me."[10] History has proved Shahu's prediction and foresight was accurate.

In his address eulogizing the scholarship of Ambedkar, Shahu said, ".... What is the problem in giving him the epithet of a pundit ? He occupies a place of pride among the scholars. Arya community, the Buddhist community and the Christians would have happily assimilated him in their fold. But he did not go there because he desires your amelioration. For that you must thank him and I do thank on my part."[11] In this conference Ambedkar initiated a special resolution that congratulated Shahu Chhatrapati for carrying out the good work of giving equal rights to the ostracized in his state and improving their conditions. The resolution proposed that to express their gratitude, 'untouchables' should celebrate Shahu's

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birthday like a festival. The resolution was approved.[12]

Also, in the conference Shahu had publicly invited Ambedkar for a meal and accordingly arranged a grand banquet at the Sontali Camp. Maharaja treated Babasaheb with great honour during his visit and finally at the time of his departure, affectionately presented him with a traditional Kolhapuri headgear – *Jaripatka*. Ambedkar was moved to receive the present and exclaimed, "The Chatrapati has bestowed upon me the headgear of honor. I will maintain its dignity all my life!"[13] The later history testifies that he preserved the honour of the Chatrapati's endowment striving all his life for betterment of the depressed classes. In fact, the pedestal of the Mangaon Conference was the real beginning of his public life. Ambedkar himself publicly acknowledged this fact in a function held in Kolhapur in 1940.[14]

INCREASING CO-OPERATION

About two months after the Mangaon Conference Shahu and Ambedkar happened to meet again in Nagpur Convention of The Akhil Bharatiya Bahishkrit Samaj (Ostracised Community) - (30 May 1920). The bond of friendship and affection between the two strengthened during this meeting. At the convention, the burning topic of the impending political reforms and the concomitant representation the untouchables would get in the Legislative Council was discussed. Actually, Ambedkar had organized this conference under the aegis of Shahu Maharaja in order to communicate to the Government the stand of the untouchable community on this issue. Babasaheb vehemently attacked the so-called stand Maharshi Shinde had taken on this issue and successfully got the conference to condemn him. As a result, a picture that the control of the untouchables' movement was going to a rising leader from that community was became clear at this convention. That was what Shahu expected of Ambedkar.

In the period that followed the affectionate correspondence between the two continued. Ambedkar had sent a letter to Shahu suggesting that a project to raise funds for the untouchables' liberation movement should be undertaken and the Shahu be included in its committee. In reply Shahu writes, "I happily permit you to include my name in the deputation you wish to send to collect funds. I am ready to be the vice-president, even an assistant secretary of the association you would form for this purpose. I think we should form an organization named 'All India Depressed Classes Education Fund', select respectable and committed men to work in it, and keep sending deputations on behalf of this association. That would facilitate the collection of funds. I am very much interested in the post of assistant secretary and I would happily perform this job."[15] - (7 June 1920). His firm opinion that any movement of the untouchables should be led by a person from their community and his role in such movement should be of an assistant is seen reflected in this letter.

26th June was the birthday of Shahu. As mentioned earlier, a resolution inspired by Ambedkar stating that the untouchable community should celebrate this day as a festive occasion was passed at the Mangaon Conference. A similar resolution was passed at the Nagpur Conference as well. In accordance with this, Ambedkar had decided to publish a special issue of *Muknayak*. A letter dated 13th June 1920

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he wrote to Shahu in this context is available in which he says he was coming to Kolhapur to get detailed information of his reign for the 'special issue.'[16] However, whether Babasaheb had come to Kolhapur as stated in the letter and whether the special issue of *Muknayak* was published is not known. That issue of *Muknayak* is not available today. If it becomes available, it would be a significant addition to the Shahu biographical literature.

During this period, Ambedkar worked as a lecturer in the Sydenham College to make a living. But he was keen to pursue his education that had remained incomplete. As he had to finish his doctorate within a stipulated period, he left for London in July 1920. Shahu not only did provide him with financial assistance towards the expenses of his higher education, but also personally visited his residence, an ordinary cement chawl at Parel.. He told Ambedkar with true warmth, "Ramabai (Ambedkar's wife) is like a younger sister to me. I shall take her to maternal home to Kolhapur until you return." We can only imagine the emotional impact of these affectionate words of the King on Ambedkar. He thanked the Chhatrapati for the hearty concern he showed and replied cordially "I have arranged for the family in Mumbai to the best of my ability; Your Highness need not take trouble."[17] This proved to be the last meeting between these two great men - (May 1920).[18]

Shahu had handed a letter to Ambedkar that he had written to his friend in England Sir Alfred Peej. He had requested Sir Peej to help Ambedkar, in the context of impending political reforms,in creating a public opinion against the neglect British political Masters had shown about the just rights of the non-Brahmin community in India.[19]

As expected by Shahu, Ambedkar kept calling upon the political leaders in England to put before them the case of the non-Brahmins. He also wrote articles in newspapers. He had called on Montagu, Secretary of State to India. In a letter to Shahu dated 3rd February 1921 he writes, "Montagu follows the instructions of the moderate leaders. However, I am convinced that henceforth he will not talk about the non-Brahmin movement with contempt. In fact no one here is bothered to understand what the non-Brahmin movement is all about. It is a matter of regret that at the time when the reforms bill was being prepared there was no strong advocate here to bring home the significance of the non-Brahmin movement. It facilitated the opponents of the movement to propogate that the movement is anti-Brahmin. The democratic side of the movement was cleverly concealed and the movement maligned. It is this perverted picture that is in the mind of a common Englishman.....now that the draft of the political reforms bill has been finalized, no one takes pain to understand the distinctions and social discriminations that exist in India. However, we should start preparations right now for the times to come. As such, whenever possible I give a fair amount of idea of how the political and social issues in India are intermixed to every Englishman that matters. May be, my efforts are too late; these may not bear fruits instantly. Only time will tell if my endeavour has been of some use or totally fruitless....."[20]

In England Ambedkar spearheaded a movement to educate the public opinion on the rights of non-Brahmins while

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simultaneously managing his higher studies. Back in India, the downtrodden people as also Shahu himself were eagerly awaiting his return. Shahu took care that the prestige and fame of Ambedkar grew even in his absence. In February 1922, an All India Conference of the Untouchable Community was held in Delhi. Shahu was the chief guest. At the very beginning of his address, Shahu mentioned Ambedkar saying with great admiration, " ...the honor of the day actually should have gone to our enthusiastic and well educated leader Mr. Ambedkar. He is more educated than me. He has taken incessant efforts for your betterment. However, it is not possible for him to be present among us as he has gone abroad. There is not an iota of doubt that even there he will profess his other vocations with thoughts of your interests in his heart."[21]

PILLAR OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The correspondence between Ambedkar and Shahu continued even though he was in England. In a letter dated 4 September 1921, he had requested Shahu to send him an amount of 200 pounds as he faced monetary crunch on account of the diminution of currency in England. At the end of this letter he had written, "I hope Your Highness is enjoying good health. We need you ever so much for you are a pillar of that great movement towards the social democracy which is making its headway in India."[22] The movement of social liberation that had continued from Mahatma Phule down to Shahu was nothing but a movement to establish social democracy. Ambedkar's appraisal of Shahu Maharaja as a pillar of this movement was an appropriate evaluation of the latter's contribution.

And when Ambedkar read in the news papers of England that this pillar of the democratic movement, and a close friend of the untouchables had ended the journey to this world and departed for the other, he was overwhelmed with grief. In the letter of condolences written to the elder son of the Rajarshi, the new Chhatrapati Rajaram, he says, "The news of the death of His Highness which I read in the newspapers came to me as a chock. I am deeply grieved by the calamitous event. In his death I have lost a personal friend and depressed classes have lost a great benefactor and greatest champion of their cause."[23]

Even after the demise of Shahu , Ambedkar expressed great respect for him on various occasions. In 1940, he had come to Kolhapur to attend the *'Dalit* Peoples' Convention.' In his address he had said, "One thing is certain about Kolhapur and I and all untouchables are proud of Kolhapur for that. It is that Shahu Maharaja laid the foundations of true democracy in Kolhapur itself. We celebrate the birth anniversary of the patron of cows and Brahmins Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja. However, he could not destroy Brahmanism. He had to fetch Gagabhatt from Kashi for his coronation for a consideration of gold. There is no way but to say that as far as the destruction of the sting of Brahmanism goes, Shahu Chhatrapati was greater than Shivaji the Great."[24]

It appears that the relations between Ambedkar and Shahu were not limited only to social movement but had acquired a colour of personal affection. It is already seen that Shahu had referred to Ramabai as his sister and had intended to take her to Kolhapur equating it with her maternal abode. Similarly, Maharaja's son Rajaram Chhatrapati and daughter Akkasaheb

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would refer to Ambedkar as Mama, the maternal uncle.[25] These incidents have to be considered as the indicators of the close and affectionate relationship the two men shared.

There is another characteristic of this relationship. It is their mutual respect. Shahu was a king. He was elder to Babasaheb in age. He had come into prominence as the saviour of the non-Brahmin lay masses of Maharashtra. Even then, he never exhibited his stature through his behavior, mannerisms, correspondence, or in conversations with Ambedkar. He appears to have honoured the latter as an equal or rather 'better educated and more reputable' friend. Ambedkar responded to the polite words of Shahu in an equally polite way. That he had a tremendous respect for Maharaja is clear from his many articulations.

We have earlier mentioned Shahu's letter written to Ambedkar referring to the waning spirit of *Mahars*. The opening address of that letter is significant. Shahu addresses Ambedkar in that letter as *Rajmanya* Lokmanya* Ambedkar." This letter is of around 1920 and its mode of address speaks of the bright future of Ambedkar that Shahu had perceived in his mind. The epithet *Lokmanya* (meaning acknowledged by the people) was prefixed only to Tilak in those days. By prefixing it to Ambedkar, Shahu wanted to suggest that he would be the *Lokmanya* leader of all the backward classes one day. This speaks not only of greatness of his mind but also of his capacity to judge the course history would take in future. History proved Shah's prophecy right. Ambedkar acquired enormous popularity like Lokmanya Tilak at the national level.

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* Rajmanya = Acknowledged by king.

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14.

LIBERATION OF NOMADIC TRIBES

We have seen thus far the various measures that Rajarshi Shahu implemented for the salvation of the untouchables. A different community other than the untouchables, much more neglected was of the nomadic tribes. Shahu's compassion did not fail to take notice of this community as well. This should be regarded as the special feature of the great task he accomplished for the ostracized.

NOMADIC TRIBES : OUT OF VILLAGE SYSTEM

The untouchable castes such as the *Chambhar, Dhor, Mahar , Mang* etc., howsoever miserly and ostracized and compelled to stay beyond the village outskirts, were nevertheless an inseparable part of the village system. They were given a place in the functioning of the village. Rather the system would not run in their absence. For example, the farmer wouldnot get leather for his draw- well without the *Dhor*, footwear without the *Chambhar*, the pulley rope without the *Mang* and the *bigari** work of the village would not be carried out without the *Mahar*. As such, the system had arranged for their living in some or the other way; had given them the rights of *Baluta* though petty in status. Though tiny, comprising a room or two they at least had a house. An untouchable caste as the *Mahar* was supposed to be *Watandar* and every *Mahar* had some land of some four *Aare* if not more. Though the touchable castes had kept the untouchables at a distance of ten hands, the society had nevertheless accepted their existence and association even if it was out of inevitability if nothing more.

The nomadic tribes had nothing of this sort to their credit. These tribes were not part of the village system. Rather they did not have a village of their own. Therefore, the entry into the system was out of question. These tribes mostly led their entire lives wandering from one place to the other and were a world unto themselves. They had nothing to do with the village system what soever. They existed as the vestiges of the primordial tribes.

*Labour or service extracted by a government or a person in power without giving remuneration for it.

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Scholars have regarded them as sort of tiny nations. They had their own independent laws and regulations just like any sovereign nation. Accordingly, the justice meted out was also different. Their *Jat panchayats* (arbitration panels) who monitored the justice were independent. They had no relation whatsoever with the laws and regulations or the judicial system of the so-called civilized world. (Even today, they do not have much).

NOMADIC TRIBES TURNED 'CRIMINALS'

It was impossible for the nomadic tribes of such dispositions to become part of the village system. For, they lived a wanderers' life from time immemorial. Some of those had made forests their home while the others roamed around the periphery of the civilized world. They lived exhibiting their innate skills and artistry. Some roamed maintaining a loose contact with the contemporary political and the military organizations. They existed making a living some or the other way. They were not given to theft and dacoity to begin with. But later on the political conditions in the country changed. The British destroyed many native kingdoms and established their sovereignty in India. Many a political and social upheaval took place. The way of life of these nomadic tribes was shaken in the resultant quagmire. Many of them lost their means of livelihood. And then they were left with no alternative but take to crime to make a living. For example, the nomadic tribe *Banjara* used to transport military provisions for the army over cattle back, while the *Chhapparband* tribe built for the military their tents and also cast coins in the mint. When the Indian States were dissolved, these nomadic tribes were also displaced. Many of these took to crime as stated above and people belonging to these castes began to be caught involved in crimes such as thefts, robbery, dacoity etc. and the British Government started branding the entire tribe as 'criminal caste'. In Maharashtra, 13 such tribes namely *Banjara, Korvi (kaikadi), Takari Bhamta, Rajput Bhamta, Kanjarbhat, Berad (Ramoshi), Maang-garudi, Phansepardhi, Chhapparbandh, Katbu, Wadd* were declared as criminal. After independence the stamp of crime on this castes was removed and they were freed of this shackle. Thenceforth they began to be termed as 'de-notified tribes.[1]

British were the political rulers of India. They had a big superiority complex of their 'civility'. When they considered all Indian people as backward and barbaric, we can only imagine what their attitude towards the nomadic tribes would be ! As political masters of India, they regarded it their prime duty to maintain peace and order and establish a rule of law in India. They had brought to book the *Thags* and the *Pendharis* out of this attitude. They were quite successful in doing so. They thought it part of their duty to make all criminal tribes scattered over the whole of the country fall in line. They are seen issuing government orders to that effect from the year 1827. According to the order of that year, these tribes were banned nocturnal movements. Also the village Patil was devolved with the task of keeping watch on them.[2]

Later, some nomadic tribes were found to have participated in the 1857 insurgency and the British turned more cautious. In 1871 to restrain such tribes they passed a special 'Criminal Tribes Act' whereby open prisons were set up all over the country for the people of these tribes. These people would be confined within a compound of

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barbed wires like a herd of sheep and many experiments were 'practiced' to reform them. However, many times atrocities were committed in the name of discipline. Those who would improve would be released and permitted to live in the adjacent 'free' colonies. Even there, they would be under compulsion of rendering attendance thrice a day. Such colonies together with the open prison were called as 'settlements'.[3]

On the backdrop of such settlement policy of the British who regarded themselves as the most civilized people in the world, the humanitarian policy the King of Kolhapur adopted appears outstandingly humanitarian and wise. Rajarshi Shahu who followed many material policies of the British refused to toe their settlement policy blindly. He treaded a different path as regards these so-called criminal tribes. His was not a path of the strong arm of law but that of the inner humanitarian activism. Therefore, he befriended, held at heart, and brought into the mainstream the so-called criminal tribes he came across namely *Kuchikorvi, Vadd, Dombari, Rajput Bhamta, Phansepardhi* etc. He brought *Korvis* from the Torgal area whereas the *Phansepardhis* from the Katkol. The others would also wander through the territories of Kolhapur principality. The people of all these tribes were gifted with some form of art innately and they were skilled in that art form. Physically they were hardy and agile; at heart, innocent and honest. The means of their livelihood were extremely petty. For example, the people of the *Dombari(Kolhati)* caste would prepare combs from the horns of animals, cages for birds etc. and as these proved insufficient to satiate the hunger, they would perform songs and dance and various items on the rope. *Phansepardhi* was a tribe that lived wandering in the forests and subsisted on petty hunting. But how can one survive just on hunting? Therefore, they had no other alternative but to steal and rob. Stealing and pilfering had become a profession of this tribe. As a result, they were most strongly branded as a criminal tribe.

SHAHU'S NEW EQUATION

Shahu refused to accept the British rulers' notion that a person born in a criminal tribe is a born criminal incapable of any improvement. He was of the view that men everywhere were the same. A man becomes a saint or a criminal because of his circumstances. Even a wild beast changes if treated humanely and with love, then why won't these people change? Not only did he propound this theory but also brought it into practice! He gave land for houses to the *Rajput Bhamta* and *Wadd* people who did such work that needed physical labour and settled them. He brought them into the society making out of them householders having their own houses. He gave land to the *Dombari* people and settled them into a colony. He encouraged them to manufacture works of art. The *Kuchikorvi* people were extremely skilled at hunting. Shahu employed them into the hunting department. They would be included in the hunting troupe whenever the King would go hunting. He would even take the *Korvis* along on his horse cart whenever he would amble around in the city. When he came across Ramu, a well-built brawny *Korvi* youth he took him out of his shanty to the *Lal Akhada* (palestra) in the palace, started him a wrestler's diet and made him into a renowned pugilist! This Ramu had later attained fame as *Kustiram* wrestler. With this one action, Shahu lent social prestige for the whole of the *Korvi* tribe.[4]

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Phansepardhis were looked upon as the most dangerous criminal tribe of all . It was not difficult for the King to seize the *Phansepardhis* in his State and put them behind bars or to create camps of barbed wires like the settlements of the British. But instead of choosing the path of punishment, he chose one of love. He went to the grassroots to find out why do these people steal and rob and found that the society had left them with no alternative; 'Unemployment and impoverishment were the causes of their sin. Unless these are done away with, it would be wrong either to punish them or teach them morality.'[5] Once Maharaja was firm about his thought, he decided to experiment with the *Phansepardhi* people. He decided to devolve upon the chiefs of the tribe, branded as the most dangerously criminal by all and sundry, the responsibility of safeguarding his own residence. Lalya and Arvya, the leaders of the *Phansepardhis* expert in shooting were appointed as special guards at Shahu's Sontali Camp.[6]

People felt that Shahu had handed over the keys of the treasury to thieves. But Shahu had decided to see not the thief but the human being in the *Phansepardhis*. Love should beget love and faith beget faith was the basic assumption in his experiment. He proved this assumption by a variety of methods. Once, Shahu had ordered that no one should be let in and Lalya-Arvya who obeyed the order to the word did not allow in even Bapusaheb, the brother of Shahu. When Bapusaheb fumed with anger, they said, "If we let you in that would tantamount to disobey the orders of the king. So better take the gun, shoot us, and go in."[7] Lalya- Arvya had displayed the commitment and honesty of the *Phansepardhis* and made Shahu's experiment a success.

Shahu employed some *Phansepardhis* as guards, some in the hunt department as dog masters while some in the police. For others, he started various works of employment in his kingdom. Some he employed on public works like construction of roads, digging of wells, building constructions, while some he sent to Radhanagri on dam construction work.[8] None of them had done such jobs in generations. Shahu was trying hard to inculcate in them the ways of making a living practiced by the civilized society and he was succeeding in it.

Shahu had started construction projects for the *Phansepardhis* at the Sontali Camp. He had arranged for the learning of children on the Camp while their parents worked. The Maharaja had ordered that the kitchen should provide two *Bhakris* to every school-going child from poor family. It was made applicable to the children of the *Phaansepardhis* as well. Some promising children among them were sent to the Gurukul of the Arya Samaj. Learning was one more way of the civilized society. The *Phansepardhis* were introduced to it out of Shahu's kindness.[9]

An order of the King of November 1912 is available which grants an amount of Rs. 1200 and land on the Kotitirth plane of Kolhapur to 23 *Phansepardhi* families to build their own houses.[10] The people who were destined to live a vagrant life were settled in one place. Shahu had allowed flocks of *Phansepardhis* to settle down at many places in his territory. He had a bungalow at Raibaug. People from three flocks of were appointed to guard the bungalow. In 1917, Shahu issued a special order whereby he granted hundreds of acres of land as *'Jat-Inam'* to these three flocks at Alajwadi, Khandal and Kankanwadi.[1] Similarly, he

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granted lands to the people of *Phansepardhi* and *Kanjarbhat* tribes in Kolhapur proper.[12]

Of all the criminal tribes the *Phansepardhis* were regarded the most abhorrent. However, Shahu loved them the most. He took them into service, made employment available, provided houses, granted lands, and enrolled their children into schools. Moreover, Shahu had carried them along among his kith and kin in a special train to participate in the marriage ceremony of Prince Rajaram ![13] *Phansepardhis* as *Varhadis* or marriage retenue in a Kings wedding party was an unheard of occurance, the first (and perhaps the last) in the social history of India! The society looked upon the *Phansepardhis* as uncivilized and barbaric. Not only their demeanor but also their life style was rough and uncouth. They used to address even the King in singular as '*Ehe Raja.*' They were oblivious of any respectful demeanor. Somehow, Shahu had more compassion and love for such barbaric people.. He enjoyed their company more than that of well accomplished sycophants. He once told Tophkhane, "Tophkhane, I like better my *Phansapardhis* than your intelligent lot. Extremely trustworthy. They do not know what cheating is. Even if I spent the entire day with them, I do not at all realize that I am hungry, let alone getting bored. Though these people might seem idiots from the way they talk, they are extremely adroit in their work and clever as well."[14]

Vyankappa Bhonsle, social worker from the tribal society, says, "At a time when all the nomadic tribes were looked upon with contempt as criminals and leading a life hardly better than animals, one of the kings of this country looked upon and treated them as humans, held them dear and tried to bring them in the mainstream of society is something the people of our tribes are extremely proud about."[15] Another social workers and well-known *dalit* author Laxman Mane says, "Shahu Maharaja treated many Nomadic and de-notified tribes like the *Phansepardhis* with motherly love and fatherly affection. Motherly love and fatherly affection are gelled into one in the person of God. Therefore, these people disdained by the society regarded Shahu Maharaja a God. The social revolution as brought about by him is seen in its concrete shape in the belief of such people."[16]

Truly, these nomads felt that Shahu was their God. In this God, they had faith and devotion. And so when the body of the Rajarshi was brought to Kolhapur after his demise, the *Phansepardhi* populace had cried their guts out with unconsolable emotion as if they had lost a member of their family![17]

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15.

STRUGGLE AGAINST CASTE DISCRIMINATION

Untouchability was the hideous form of caste discrimination. Untouchability and caste discrimination were the two sides of the same coin. Once the concept that basically humankind is one everywhere and that it has only one caste, i.e.humanity, is accepted; caste discriminations and untouchability vanish. This concept was humanitarian as it was of equality. In the modern world, this concept spread rapidly in the continents of Europe and America where society based on equality of status could be established . The important factor that facilitated this social formation was that there was no rigid caste discrimination like that in India though there were religious differences like Jew-Christian, Catholic-Protestant, or racial differences like black and white.. As the concept of caste and the compulsion on each caste to follow the profession allotted to, it was absent in Western societies, they could hail sacred the three principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in societal transactions and bring about comprehensive self-development.

PYRAMID OF CASTE SYSTEM

In India, grip of the caste system on the society was a big hurdle in the onward march of social development on the basis of these principles. To put aside this hurdle and follow the path of social progress was by no means an easy task. Caste distinctions were the distinguishing characteristics of Hindu religion and Hindu society. Hindu society was basically structured on the concepts of high and low. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has analyzed this structure very incisively by equating it with a multistoried pyramid. In the very first issue of *Muknayak* he says, "It is clear that the castes included in the Hindu religion are influenced by the concepts of high and low. Hindu society is a pyramid and each caste is a storey. But the thing to be noted is that this pyramid is devoid of a staircase and as such there is no means of travelling from one storey to the other. The one born on a storey ought to die on the same. The person on the lower storey, howsoever capable he might be, is not allowed on the upper floor and the one on the upper howsoever worthless he might be, never thrown down below. To speak clearly the sentiments of high and low that exist among the castes are not based on merit. The one born in the higher caste despite

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being totally worthless must be regarded as of higher status whereas the one born in a lower caste despite being extremely meritorious must remain lowly forever!"[1]

Every caste in the Hindu society was independent and observed intercaste food and marriage taboos. In addition, there would be many sub castes within a caste and each sub caste again followed intercaste marriage and food restrictions. One incidence from the biography of Ambadkar is worth the notice. At the end of the 1920 conference of the ostracized people held at Nagpur in the year 1920, Ambedkar had organised a common dinner of the 18 sub-castes of the *Mahars* with great efforts ![2] *Mahars* had suffered the most the torture of caste discrimination. The fact that a person of the stature of Ambedkar had to take great efforts to push down the throat of its 18 sub castes the idea of having food together underlines the horrible and yet momentous nature of caste discrimination that Mahatma Phule, Shahu and Ambedkar himself had faced while fighting it.. The social reality that every caste was again subdivided into many sub castes was not only limited to the *Mahars* but it also pervaded the entire caste system..... *Brahmins, Marathas, Mali, Sali* - no one was an exception. On the topmost storey of the pyramid of caste system, as Ambedkar had described, were the Brahmins. Below them were Marathas; below Marathas were other castes and still below were the castes of *Alutas-Balutas*, and the various untouchable castes. Each caste thought of the one below it as of low quality and even the untouchable castes were not an exception. Mahatma Phule had begun the task of breaking this pyramid of caste system that stood on the solid rock of inequality over thousands of years. Shahu Maharaja continued the same. Shahu was better equipped than Phule. He had power and the will to use it towards the betterment of society. Shahu used both, power and will power to fight the evil of caste discriminations.

SHAHU'S THOUGHTS ON ERADICATING CASTE

Chhatrapati Shahu's thinking on the problem of caste discrimination can be elucidated from the speeches he delivered at various conventions and conferences. His thinking was straight and down to the ground and he minced no words while articulating his mind. He spoke earnestly on social evils such as inequality, injustic and exploitation that have permeated the society. The root cause of all these evils, according to him, is the practice of caste discrimination. The main cause behind the thousands of years of enslavement of India is caste distinctions; countless divisions because of caste distinctions made impossible any sort of unity among the Indian people and resulted in slavery. Taking to task people who advocated continuance of system of caste distinctions devoid of caste hatred, he says, "...If this advocacy is honest their ignorance must be pitied. For, the effect of caste distinctions is caste hatred. So, if you have to get rid of the effect you ought to rid the cause first."[3] While propounding that the only way of eliminating caste hatred is the destruction of caste distinctions Shahu says, "Caste hatred is a very old ailment of India. The myth that Parshuram wiped off the *Kshatriyas* from the face of the earth reflects completely this caste hatred. The *Peshwas* razed to ground of the houses of the non-Brahmins under the plough driven by donkeys out of the same caste hatred. The same *Brahmins* whose topknots and sacred threads were protected by Shri Shivaji

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Maharaja and brave *Marathas* now declare the *Marathas* as *Shudras*. What is the reason behind this audacity? If this caste hatred is to be given up, caste discrimination needs to be destroyed. Let us all destroy caste distinctions and be one."[4]

Shahu had thought about the caste system from a fundamental biological point of view. Man is one of the many animal-species that exist in nature. It is the only one of its kind and distinctions within it are impossible. Illustrating the dictum of sacred texts about species that a 'specie breeds its own kind', he says, "Those who resemble in essence, structure and origin shall be understood to be of the same species." Further, he adds the grammatical definition that, "The one who resemble in structure resemble in specie. For example, men, cow, horse, elephant etc."[5] This definition of specie was a blow to foundations of the caste system of Hindu religion.

Shahu gives many times the example of the Samurai people of Japan. These Samurais thought of themselves as superior and the other Japanese people as inferior. However, once it was decided to make a strong and modern nation out of Japan they voluntarily renounced their superior status and rights and assimilated in the mainstream of the nation. As a result, Japan came to the fore as a powerful nation.[6] Shahu asks why should not the Brahmins and Kshatriyas do in India what the Samurais did in Japan. The destruction of the caste distinctions is a national task and should be started by Brahmins and Kshatriyas (Marathas). They should give up the rights of superiority they have been enjoying from ancient times and set an example before others. In this context Shahu says, "If the efforts to break the caste distinctions begin from lower castes they might result into disaster. However, if this is done by the higher castes, it would be considered a thought-provoking example of self-sacrifice to other castes. Until this happens, each caste without taking advantage of the present circumstances to increase the rift, should try hard for its improvement and increase in status and to climb to the upper steps whereas the upper castes should climb down a bit to extend a helping hand to the ones below if need be. If this happens, there is a possibility of the gruesome task of breaking caste distinctions smoothly and peacefully. We the Marathas should also be compelled to break castes and unify."[7]

In setting up caste-based hostels, Shahu had followed the above stated principle that until the caste distinctions are totally done away with, each caste should try to improve itself and reach to a higher status. He had encouraged various conferences of backward castes from the same point of view. Many times, he had even presided over such conferences. However, he feared that such encouragement might lead to the increase in caste vanity within the respective castes and intensify the existent rift. Out of this fear he has warned the organizers of such conferences, "I fear that if I encourage such conferences I might be guilty of committing the sin of intensifying caste discriminations. Therefore, I call upon the leaders of all castes- keep your eyes over the distant future. Do not look at your feet. Breaking caste distinctions is the right thing. It is necessary. Practising caste discriminations is a sin. It is a hurdle in the path of the national development. You should try hard to get rid of it. Keep this awareness in mind and then organize caste conference as an attempt towards achieving it. We should be careful that such conferences do not strengthen caste-bonds

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and intensify caste discriminations."[8]

Shahu has elaborated the aforementioned point on one more occasion. The 'Arya Kshatriya Samaj' had organized a conference at Kolhapur in 1920. Delivering the president's address in that conference Shahu had said, "I have articulated many times before that caste distinctions are a major ailment of India and I am persistently trying to destroy such distinctions. In spite of that, I assist your caste-based efforts. This action of mine contradicts my words, some might say. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate to speak a few words in this context. Up to certain limits, caste pride and caste distinctions cannot be shunned. People take special care of their children only and nobody would call it wrong. However, everyone would accuse the one who cares all his life only for his children oblivious of everything else. It is apt to strive for the betterment of the community in which one grows; however, everyone should always keep in mind that there is a big society, a very big society outside and we need to serve that society as well. As such, the pride for caste should be limited. We are Indians and we must not forget that we have the responsibility of the development of the country. To put in a nutshell, the caste pride should be conducive towards national development and not one that ignores it."[9] The Maharaja was well aware of the fact that the caste system and the vanity of each caste were too entrenched to disappear within a generation or a decade or two. Therefore, he appeals to each caste to keep its self-pride within limits and not to ignore the well-being of the greater society that existed outside of their caste.

Shahu's opponents used to make an accusation that on the one hand he condemned the caste distinctions while on the other incited caste jealousies by encouraging the lower castes. Shahu has cogently answered this accusation. He says, "I treat the backwards as my equals and try to ameliorate them, which I think is my sacred duty. If I do not do so, my conscious will trouble me for not performing my duty. If the upliftment of the backward castes were not attempted, the boastful proponents of caste distinctions would not restrain from suppressing them. As such, it is clear that espousing the cause of the backwards is not abetting caste hatred."[10] On one more occasion he said that this espousal of the cause was akin to a doctor prescribing nutritional food and medication to a weak and debilitated child and bringing him to the level of healthy children. It does not amount to *Pangtiprapanch* (caste partiality) nor does it increase the caste jealousies.[11]

MEASURES AND DIRECT ACTION

Shahu did not just wait at propounding the thought that the caste distinctions should be eliminated; he fearlessly adopted measures and took concrete action to achieve that end. Quite a few taboos of the caste system existed. Food taboo, marriage taboo and profession taboo were the three important among such taboos. In this context, we have already seen that Maharaja had discarded the food taboo by accepting the food at the hands of untouchables publicly in functions and ceremonies. However, the taboo of intermarriage was far more severe than the taboo of food. Shahu knew it well that until this taboo is practiced by the society the caste distinctions would not be destroyed . However, to overrule this taboo and act accordingly was an act of great courage in those times. Shahu did show such courage.

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He passed a law validating intercaste marriages and conferred on them a legal status in his state.[12] The orthodox were opposed such a law not only in Kolhapur but also all over the country. Previously in 1917, Vitthalbhai Patel had tabled a bill concerning the inter-caste marriage in the Central Legislative Council. A hue and cry was raised against it all over the country. The orthodox leaders such as Lokmanya Tilak, the Shankaracharya of Puri, and the Shankaracharya of Karveer opposed the Patel Bill fiercely. They feared that such a bill if passed would result in the 'debacle of religion and the rounding up of everything' (a horrible crisis of morality,faith and identities). However, the reformists like Tej Bahadur Sapru, Lala Lajpat Rai and Shahu Maharaja felt that in such rounding up of the society lay the seeds of its development. They had openly supported the Patel Bill. Shahu supported the Bill saying," Whether the development of this country would take place early or late depends on when the caste distinctions would end. For this to happen it is essential that inter marriages between the members of different castes are established on a wider scale. Inter-food associations would now go on increasing howsoever anyone might oppose them. However, it is not so about intermarriages. To create an inclination towards such marriages first the legal hurdles in its path need to be removed. Such marriages should be accorded legal status and the offspring out of such marriage should get all the rights of a legal child."[14]

Shahu had decided to set before the society an example by taking a bold step in this regard. Accordingly, he fixed the marriage of a girl, Chandraprabha, his paternal cousin from the family of his origin, the Kagalkar Ghatges, with Yashwantrao, the son of Tukoji Holkar of the Indore, *Dhangar* by caste. He had devolved the responsibility of making Tukoji accept the proposal to his confidant Gundopant Pishvikar (Dharmadhikari) whereas he had taken upon himself to convince the father of the bride. A plan was drawn to bring about 100 *Maratha-Dhangar* intercaste marriages between the two states of Kolhapur and Indore once this mission was successful. That would have cost Rs.60,000. Each couple would be granted some land and property as reward in both the states, as also assistance for learning and employment. According to this plan, 25 marriages were solemnized but the remaining were abandoned on account of the untimely death of Shahu.[15]

The Maharaja also annulled the third taboo of caste regarding the profession. According to this taboo, every caste had the compulsion to follow only the profession that custom and tradition had allotted to it. The society had kept no alternative before a carpenter, a blacksmith, and a *Mahar* to practice anything but carpentery, smithy and *maharki* to eke out a living. An attempt to find an alternative trade than one's caste was regarded as crime against not only the caste but also the state. Under such circumstances, Shahu absolved the backward castes of the village *Balutedars* from the compulsion of their professions. On 22nd February 1918 in the gazette of the Kolhapur State, a declaration was published abolishing the *balutedari* system from the State. Accordingly, the *balutedars* were freed of their compulsory professions. They were permitted to stay anywhere, practise any vocation they pleased and do whatever work they wanted to do. Their *inam* lands were converted into *rayatwari* lands. Moreover, as *balutedari* was abolished, the *rayat* (Farmer society) was freed of the responsibility of providing

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balute to the *baluedars*.[16] In this manner, Shahu freed the backward castes of the *balutedars* from a sort of social slavery by granting them freedom of profession, movement, and residence.

We have earlier referred to the orthodox views of national leaders like Lokmanya Tilak on the *Varnashram* institution, the caste system, and the rights of the higher castes in the system. However, the views of Mahatma Gandhi- the national leader rising on the horizon of India- that favoured the caste system and *Varnashram* system during that period do not fail to startle. Gaandhi regarded untouchability as a crime against humanity and a blemish on the Hindu religion. The same Gandhi, during this period appears making statements such as, 'Hindu society cannot give up caste system'; 'caste is the strength of India and the secret of Hindu religion'; 'to begin with, the system of caste distinctions was utilitarian and it helped the progress of the nation'; 'in my opinion, the propagation that inter-dining and intercaste marriages are essential for the development of the nation is a native belief borrowed from the Western countries'; 'I am against the movements that aim at destroying the caste system'.[17] These statements were the opinions against reforming the Hindu religion. Mahatma Gandhi who had fought a harsh struggle against the racist regime of the tyrannical Whites of South Africa had taken such an orthodox stand regarding the caste discriminations in India. It clearly betrays that at that time, he had failed to grasp the gravity of the inequality and tyranny the caste system had bred. However, later as he attained a very high status as the top leader of the national movement for freedom he acknowledged that the caste system of the Hindu society is the main hurdle in the path of establishing national unity and social equality. As a result, his views about the caste system went on changing over the period. Later on, especially over the period after 1931, he deplored the inter-dining and inter-marriage taboos practised by the caste system and reached the ideological point from where he began to advocate that castes should be destroyed.[18]

Though this is true, the point to be noted is that during Shahu's times when a champion of human equality and freedom of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi was not ready to sympathize with the movements against caste discrimination, it was no wonder that the common man was strongly opposed to such activities. In his times, the national leaders who led the freedom movement too were not interested in redressing the social issues of untouchability and caste discriminations sincerely. As such, Maharshi Shinde, the reformer with a national outlook, had to put incessant efforts to pass the resolution condemning untouchability from the platform of the Indian National Congress. The efforts of Shahu towards the elimination of caste distinctions should be looked at on this backdrop. Only then can we get the exact idea how difficult his struggle against the practice of caste discrimination was.

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16.

LAWS FOR WOMEN'S PROTECTION

The redemption of the backward communities had become the main driving force of Shahu's life. The class of women as it existed in the society then, was also in a way neglected and backward in everyway. In a strongly male-dominated culture of the country, a multitude of injustices and atrocities were being perpetrated on women. The customs such as child marriage, widow marriage denial of education, ritual of *purdah* had made women helpless and totally dependent. Many social reformers from Mahatma Phule to Principal Agarkar had done the work of boldly voicing the injustice and atrocities committed against women. The efforts taken by Mahatama Phule first and Maharshi Karve later towards education of women deserve a special mention in the history of Maharashtra. Actually, the movement of women's education pioneered by Phule was a movement of the liberation of women. In his state, Shahu Maharaja not only did encourage womens' education but also passed many acts to protect the natural rights of women and tried to check their exploitation from society and family. In a way, this was his contribution to the movement of women's emancipation.

WIDOW REMARRIAGE ACT

In July 1917, Shahu enacted a provision legalizing the remarriage of a widow. According to a custom followed in many Hindu castes, during the remarriage of a widow the exact rituals required to solemnize a marriage were not performed. This would lead to many problems. This act did away with all such problems. In addition, this act started the practice of legal registration of marriage. As a result, women were armed with a weapon to fight the probable injustice in the form of the legal evidence of marriage rituals that could be exhibited.[1]

Shahu was of the opinion that for the well-being of society it was extremely essential that widow remarriages were legally sanctioned. In 1919 speaking at the Kurmi Kshatriya Conference in Kanpur he had said, "I am happy to see that the practice of widow remarriage is in vogue amongst the Kurmi community. I believe, your *Kshatriya* caste would remain free of sins such as adultery, infanticide etc. This is the need of the adversity – *Apat-dharma*.

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It is meant to keep human society flawless. It is supported by sacred texts such as the Vedas. Our Government has also passed an act and sanctioned widow remarriage. "How sad it is that in the castes that do not follow this Apat-dharma, sins such as infanticide, adultery etc. are taking place and thousands of children are dying every day!"[2] In this same conference, Shahu condemned the practice of *purdah* that confined women and obstructed the development of their natural acumen. In that context he said, "The Indian people think there are three means of development: first, the purdah, the second, condemnation of widow remarriage, and the third the taboo on dining with all and sundry. What a wonder! Kashtriya women such as *Rajmata* Jijabai, the founder of the Kolhapur State Maharani Tarabai, Maharani Sati Ahilyadevi, Maharani Kamlabai etc. have governed their states and also won battles on the battlefield. This was just impossible remaining confined into the purdah. Purdah is hardly a countrywide custom today. In the provinces like Maharashtra, Madras, Gujarat, etc there is no purdah at all. Even in other provinces, this practice is followed by only a few castes. Because of purdah, the qualities like bravery etc. in women are snuffed out.[3]

THE INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE ACT

We have already referred to the intercaste marriage act that was passed in the State of Kolhapur. This Act was published in the gazette of the Kolhapur State on July 12, 1919 under the title 'The law relating to marriage in the territory of Kolhapur.' According to it the people belonging to the two main religions in the State namely the Jains and the Hindus were allowed the privilege to marry anyone from any caste of their religion unmindful of the inter-caste taboos. Such inter-caste marriages were declared as legal. According to one article of this act, it was made mandatory that the age of the bride must be full 14 years while the groom must be 18 years. In those times, the practice of child marriage was in vogue and a girl was generally married before the age of ten. The British Government had very courageously passed the 'consent of marriage' act in 1891 and made it compulsory by law that the 'consummation age of the girl should at the least be 12.' However, the traditionalists such as Lokmanya Tilak had opposed this act vehemently maintaining that the rule increasing the age up to 12 is one that interferes with the Hindu religious practices.[4] On this background, the Act making 14 as the compulsory age for marriage must be definitely said to be very bold and progressive. The next article of the Act says that the bride who has completed the age of 18 years would not need the permission of her father or guardian to marry! This was a very peculiar article that allowed a woman freedom to select the partner for her life all by herself. In addition, the marriage solemnized under this Act would be registered as per the official procedure. If we take into consideration the limitation of those times it would not be out of place to say that this Act was a revolutionary step of the Shahu promulgating the social liberty of men and women.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO WOMEN ACT

On 2nd August 1919, two important Acts protecting women were published in the state gazette of Kolhapur. One was issued to put an end to the cruel treatment

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to women or to prevent such occurrence while the other related to the rules of divorce. A woman would be tortured in various ways by her husband and in-laws in many families. Some forms of torture were such that the perpetrator could not be brought within the ambit of the Indian Penal Code. Taking into account this folly, Shahu devised a comprehensive law which would not allow any kind of torture to escape from its clutches. Before enforcing this act, Shahu had issued an order under his signature that clarified the reasons and objectives behind its enactment. This order shows how keenly he had thought about the atrocities a woman has to face within a family. In this order, Shahu says ".... In India the spread of Western learning is so slow that it is not helping improvement in the conditions of women the way it should. The Indian lawgivers have allowed the patron of the family to punish lightly a woman if necessary; however, this permission is thought by men as an authorization to misuse it to treat women in any brutal way they desire. As such, this law is passed to prevent the atrocities committed by men on women."

Specifying the objectives of this law Shahu continues further, "We have specified certain things to decide what behaviour amounts to cruelty. These might be thought to be too harsh on the backward and the illiterate classes. However if we start depending solely on the positive outcome of learning alone, the task of the amelioration of women would progress at a very slow pace. It seems essential that for the effects of learning to materialize fast it should be supplemented with the dread of law. The principle that things are happening in their natural course gradually and that we need not interfere with them is applicable only to a well-reformed society of high quality. The task of reforming a backward people would never be accomplished without the aid of law. Many varieties of cruelty towards women are such that they cannot come in the ambit of the word offense and are unaffected by the Indian Penal Code. Nevertheless, these varieties are sometimes so atrocious that women begin to feel that their life is a big irritation and burden on the earth. Keeping these facts in mind, we have defined cruelty in such a way that not a single kind of bad demeanor should escape its scope."

"We should also note that though extreme form of troublesome and tyrannical behaviour takes place among the higher classes, it is never reported. Those women do not come out in public nor are efforts made to bring them. Therefore, we have formed general criteria in such a way that even the forms of atrocities practised in the higher classes are covered in this definition."[5] The Act of 11 articles had prescribed the person guilty of cruelty against woman a punishment of six months of imprisonment and a fine up to Rs. 200.

THE DIVORCE AND LEGACY ACT

The articles of the other act that related to divorce were also drafted taking into consideration the protection of rights of women and provision for their livelihood. In case of an issue, the law also provided for its custody, education, and maintenance. In the order issued relating to this Act, Shahu elaborates his objectives thus. " ...The Darbar has noticed that there is a significant indifference in many castes as regards divorce, and is of the opinion that if allowed to continue, it would transform the society into a totally amorous one resulting into the destruction of the ritual of marriage, the foundation of any

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civilized society. Therefore, it has been decided to rest the material relations between husband and wife on stronger foundations by allowing them divorce. In addition, it has been decided to abolish the custom of leaving the separation of the marital bond at the whim of the caste arbitrators. Framing of rules regarding legalizing the marriage of a person who has broken the marital bond and the custody of the child born before such breakage has also been planned."[6] This act annulled the divorce that depended upon the whim of the caste arbitration panel which was most of the times unjust to women. Moreover, women's natural rights were offered the strong foundation of law.

On 17th January, 1920, an important law related to social reform titled, 'The Act of Corrections in the Hindu Devolution of Property Act' was published in the Gazette of the Kolhapur State. The draft of this Act is scripted in both languages, English and Marathi. According to this Act, the existing difference between the rights of legacy of the illegitimate offspring of the Shudra and that of the Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaishya, the higher *varnas* was abrogated. The illegitimate progeny of all the varnas were given a legal right in the property of the biological father. The second article of this Act is significant from the point of view of the 'fallen' women.

PREVENTION OF *DEVDASI* CUSTOM ACT

A vicious practice of dedicating girls in the service of God was widely prevalent among the lower classes till recently. (And even today it has not been eradicated completely.) Out of this practice a class of fallen women such as *Jogtin, Murali, Devdasi, Bhaveen* had come into existence, a blemish on the society. Shahu attempted to prevent by law the practice that created such blot.

These girls when left in the name of God became entirely the property of god. They could maintain no relation whatsoever with their parent family. Similarly, they would have no right of legacy in the income of their biological parents. However, in the temple institution she would get such rights that devolved upon her by tradition and a particular kind of social status in the eyes of law. Even if these rights and status were of an extremely lowly nature, they had the sanction of society and tradition. Shahu, by force of the aforesaid law, refused to acknowledge these rights and status, but simultaneously endowed these women with legal rights in the property of their biological parents.[7] In other words, Shahu tried to put an end to this practice by abrogating the legal status these women enjoyed in society.

In the introduction of the English version, clarifying the objects of this law Shahu says, "The position of those unfortunate girls who in accordance with very ancient custom is too frequently under the forms of religion consecrated in early childhood to a life of public immorality needs little comment. It is a blot upon the Hindu law that it should have recognized such a practice and made a show of compensating girls thus forced from their tenderest years into a life of open infamy by certain concessions to their unique status and an implicit regularization of what is in fact an open and gross scandal. No such status with peculiar rights attaching to it ought to be recognized and sanctioned by the Law of any civilised state."[8]

It would not be out of place to state that Shahu made the above law with the same view with which he confiscated the Mahar

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watans. Mahar watans compelled *Mahars* to perform the menial tasks for society and to tolerate social slavery in the guise of forced labour. Since Shahu abolished these Mahar watans the menial tasks and forced labour were automatically put to an end by law. As a result, the *Mahar* community became independent and the process of their assimilation in the mainstream of society commenced. Similarly, Shahu felt that with the abrogation of the rights that *the Jogtinis Muralis, Devdasis* etc. enjoyed in the temple property and by denial of their legal status in the temple institution they would be freed of this pernicious practice and begin to live a free life.

Shahu by enacting laws of protection of social iliberty of women during his reign in a way had given a proof of his governance that was progressive and committed to the welfare of people. We cannot definitely say that the exploitation of women or the atrocities committed on them stopped on enactment of these laws. However, we cannot also underestimate social significance of the legislation enacted by Shahu. It should be noted that Shahu had enacted and enforced these revolutionary laws in a time when such laws protecting the rights of women were non existent even in the realm of the progressive British Government nor it was ready to face the ire of the orthodoxy by enacting such laws. After independence, many movements began with the aim to free helpless women of domestic violence or to liberate them from the evil and barbaric practice such as *Devdasi*. On this background the phenomenon of a king 90 years ago, who thinks of redemption of such women and acts towards material fulfilment of his idea, is indeed outstanding.

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17.

EDUCATION

Education was regarded as the master key to all reforms by all the social reformers from Mahatma Phule to *Karamveer* Bhaurao Patil who had avowed the redemption of the non-Brahmin masses. Education meant knowledge. The non-Brahmin lay folk had remained devoid of it for centuries and thus lay rotting in the murk of ignorance and penury. Lack of education meant lack of knowledge. We have earlier referred to how this deficiency had led to a number of ailments in the non-Brahmin society as aptly described by Phule. Though at the root of all the disorder was ignorance, at the root of this ignorance was caste discrimination and the ban imposed by the upper castes on the learning of the lower. While propounding that this ban on education was the reason behind the debacle of the nation, Shahu says, "I am of the strong opinion that learning is our only saviour. History betrays that no nation has progressed without education. A nation that rolls in ignorance never would breed great warriors and diplomats. Therefore, India badly needs compulsory and free education. In this context, our past is one long dark night in history. Only one caste had the monopoly of learning. Manu and the lawmakers that followed put restrictions on the transactions of various castes according to the exigencies of that time and the doors of the temples of education were closed on the people of lower castes. They were banned even from reading their own religious texts and Vedas. No other religion but Hindu has acquired notoriety for perpetrating such blind and sorrowful conditions."[1]

BRITISH EFFORTS AND POLICIES

The British were the first political rulers who broke the ban on learning in this country. In 1854, Sir Charles Wood maintained in his despatches that it was the pious duty of the British rulers to make available to the Indian people the benefits of Western culture by providing them education. Accordingly the doors of education were opened to the people of all castes and religions in India. Schools were set up at many places. Some were established by the Government while some by private institutions and individuals. The Missions also had their own schools. However, children belonging to untouchable castes such as *Mahar, Maang* etc were not allowed in these schools. In the missionary schools,

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untouchables were not discriminated against but the parents and children of the higher castes would obstruct them from coming to such schools. Though the principle of education for all was accepted on paper, even the Government was helpless before the claims of *varna* superiority of higher castes. The Government, therefore, had separate schools for the untouchables. However, this provision of the Government was of a very flimsy nature. Mahatma Phule in his presentation to the Hunter Commission has said that the Government had set up such schools only in towns; in a city like Pune, which had a population of more than 5000 untouchables, only one school was established for them and even in this school, less than 30 students were present everyday.[2] Except Brahmins, the educational condition of other castes in society was not much different from the untouchables. There was a huge apathy for learning among the non-Brahmin society as a whole. This apathy was born out of ignorance and penury. Besides the society's sentiments namely the superiority complex of the Brahmins who regarded learning as their exclusive monopoly and the inferiority complex of the non-Brahmin community, that thought of education as beyond its reach had created a mentality that had only added to indifference for learning.

The policy of the British Government in this regards was favorable to the upper caste monopoly of education. They had propounded the filteration theory as regards the spread of education in the country. The basic assumption of this policy was that over a period, the learning imparted to the upper classes would filter down to the lower classes(masses), thereby educating the entire society in the process. This policy was not only beneficial to the upper castes; it also helped them maintain their monopoly in the field of education. For, it was this class who was to decide whether the flow of the learning falling from above should be passed below or otherwise. This policy was beneficial to the Government and also it absolved the Government of its responsibility to impart training to the non-Brahmin society so numerous in quantity. In addition, the training imparted to the upper castes would provide educated work force enough for the governance of the country. As such, there was nothing strange in the indifference of the political rulers about the education of non-Brahmin lay folks. On the other hand, as the upper castes blocked the flow of the river of learning at their level, the waters naturally did not filter down. The lower classes remained as thirsty as ever.

PHULE-SHAHU ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION

On this background, the first saviour of the lower classes who rebelled against this injustice was Mahatma Jotirao Phule. Having realized that without education the lower classes would not be freed of material and mental slavery, he not only established schools for the children of *Shudras* and *Atishudras* of society but also began to appeal to the Government persistently from the year 1880 that primary education be made compulsory. Later on in his application to the Hunter Commission he appears to be insisting on free and compulsory primary education for all children below the age of 12.[3] However no one appears to have made this demand after Phule except in the resolution of education tabled by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the Central Legislative Council

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in 1910.[4] In fact the endeavours of reformers of this period were mainly confined to the problems of the upper castes such as women education, widow remarriage, *jarath kumari vivaha* (that is the marriage between old groom and child bride), women's age of consent etc. On the other hand, the efforts of the great leaders of national freedom movement were confined to the problems of higher education and the I. C. S. examination. These men did not feel it necessary that the backward classes should get primary education. This was because they did not belong to those classes. As Phule belonged to the lower class, it was natural for him to have yearning for the redemption of this class and hence he insisted on compulsory and free primary education.

Shahu carried forward the ideals of Phule. He considered learning as the mother of all social reforms and progress. To free the backward classes of its mental slavery he strongly advocated imparting minimum primary education to them. He had said in a speech delivered at Nasik, "For the non-Brahmins to muster strength to overthrow the heavy and tyrannical yoke that has been imposed on their intelligence and knowledge, free and compulsory primary education is essential."[5]

In his presidential address delivered from the pedestal of the All India Maratha Education Conference held at Khamgaon in 1917, Shahu, while explaining to his caste brethren the significance of education in modern times, says ".....It feels strange to tell you that we need to learn how to eat, how to breath! Yet, that needs to be done. These days, agriculture has become so methodical that the one who wants to be successful in it has to read and understand various books written on it... the modern methods of warfare need learning. Every soldier should be able to read the books on the science of combat. Here also we are faced with the question of learning. If the Marathas are imparted education they would certainly make better soldiers. In these days of war, the people in the artillery division should know Mathematics well. Therefore, the same thing needs to be repeatedly told and after pondering over the situation, one conclusion could be drawn and that is each Maratha should be well educated."[6]

Shahu felt that for the society to be prosperous and powerful good farmers, good teachers, good traders, good entrepreneurs, and good soldiers should come to the fore out of the non-Brahmin masses; and for that to happen the streams of the Ganges of education should be channelized into the villages at the doorsteps of the poor. He was not opposed to higher education. However, he was not interested to offering to a few a full multi-course luxury dinner of higher education when the large majority of backward classes was deprived of one square meal of primary education. The upper castes who could afford the luxury of higher education did not feel it necessary to bother if the masses got the minimum primary education. Shahu says, "We know schemings and ulterior designs of extremist newspapers like *Kesari* which pontificates that before making primary education compulsory the school buildings that are currently used should be enlarged and made airy and it is more essential to spend money for this. This attitude would definitely anger any man of common intelligence. 'No cake to a few until all are served with bread', is the policy of the Labor Party in England. However, here 90 percent of the people starve while the

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remaining 10 percent gobble up *Puran polis*.* It is clear how much these people care for the *rayats*. While they (Brahmins) care not to arrange even a coarse bread for the starving masses, they are clamoring to serve delicate ghee on the their *Puran polis*.[7]

FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION ACT

The Administrative Report of the State of Kolhapur reveals that the idea of making primary education universal in the State had occured to Shahu around the year 1912-13. The report says, "The department of education has specially attracted the attention of Chatrapati Maharaja as before. One cannot see the King's generosity to this extent in other departments. Though efforts are being made to spread education among the backward classes the Maharaja is not satisfied with the results achieved until now. Therefore Maharaja is thinking it necessary to widen the foundations of learning by making education universal in order to give momentum to the current rate of progress."[8] Shahu carried out a novel experiment to bring into practice the principle of universal education. He planned to set up a school in every village and appoint a *watani teacher*** from the community that was in majority in that village instead of a wage earner as teacher. To implement this plan a committee with Bapusaheb, Shahu's brother, as its president was formed. This experiment did not meet with success though.[9]

In 1917, Shahu took a decisive step regarding primary education. A declaration published of 24th July of that year says, "...From the day of commencment of Ganesh festival (30th September) primary education has been made free and compulsory in the territory of Karveer. The fee that is presently charged is being cancelled in all primary schools."[10] A committee of three Brahmin education experts namely Karmarkar, Marathe and Professor Panditrao was appointed to prepare the paradigm plan for compulsory education. Education inspector Dongre was given the responsibility of preparing the syllabus. A budget of Rs. one lakh was announced for this scheme. The royal treasury was to provide an amount of Rs.80,000 whereas the temple fund was to contribute the rest. The remainder amount after expenditure was to be utilized in construction of training colleges and for purchasing educational equipments.[11]

Soon thereafter, based on the regulations prepared by the committee of experts, the Act of Compulsory Education came in force. One of its objects said that the law had been made to help our entire population read and write, realize and improve its conditions. The Act had made it compulsory for parents to send their children of appropriate age to school. In case they did not send they were to pay a fine of rupee one per child per month.[12]

IMPLEMENTATION

Under this scheme, a school was set up in every village having a population of 500 to 1000. How would a building be available in so small a village? So, village office, temples, *Dharmshalas* were used as school buildings. Where even such buildings were not available it was ordered to build a temple of Goddess Tulja Bhavani from the temple funds and start a school in one of its halls and village office in the other.[13] At

*A wheaten cake with stuffing of coarse sugar, split pease etc.
**A teacher who gets hereditary estate, land, rights etc. in lieu of his salary.

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some places, buildings were constructed specially for schools. In a year, 96 new schools began to function in different villages of the State. The first compulsory school of this kind was inaugurated by Shahu himself at village Chikhli- (March 4, 1918). Latthe, Shahu's biographer, has said for the first time elementary education came within the reach of around 75,000 villagers; more than 4500 children out of them began learning.[14]

A small State like Kolhapur spending an amount of Rs. 1 lakh for primary education every year was not an ordinary thing. At the time when the monthly salary of a primary teacher was Rs.12, the total outlay was stupendous[15].

Even the budget for education of the Bombay Presidency that covered a vast area comprising Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Sindh was less than Rs. 1 lakh. It was increased to Rs. 1 lakh much later in 1930.[16] On this background, the fact that Shahu was spending so much from the state income on primary education should be regarded unprecedented in the education history of India. He raised this amount charging a nominal tax of one rupee on each household of the State.[17] In this one rupee, he had arranged free primary education of all the children from that household. The big shots in the society such as the *Inamdars*, *Saranjamdars* were also included in this social work. An education cess of 10 to 20 percent was imposed on their income. In an order issued, Shahu says, ".... We believe these people would happily share the economic burden for the education of the *rayats* of their area.[18] Soon after, the education cess was levied upon the money-lenders, lawyers doctors in the State and the high ranking officers of the Darbar of Kolhapur by a special act (August 16, 1918).[19] The scheme of primary education was thus strongly supported economically. If the ruler really cares for the well being of the ruled, he never falls short of money if he has a strong political will. Shahu has shown this.

It should be noted that around the same time in 1923, Education Minister Prin. R.P. Paranjpe of Bombay Presidency, had announced in the Legislative Council that the idea of free and compulsory education was impossible from the practical point of view.[20] The intellectuals of the higher classes had not much welcomed this scheme of free primary education. From the very beginning, the journals like 'Servants of India' had taken a pessimistic view : ".....The scheme of primary education as outlined by the Darbar is very defective in conception and execution may take several long years if at all it materialises."[21] We have already seen that the editor of *Kesari* had advised the Britsh Government to improve the existing school buildings instead of spending on compulsory primary education.

On this background, Shahu set up a special independent department for compulsory and free education in his State. Two senior officers, the Director, and the Educational Inspector, were given its charge. In addition, Shahu declared that this Department would remain under his vigilance.[22] All the officers in the State ranging from the *Mamledar-Mahalkari* to the village *Patil* were included in the movement of primary education. The responsibilities like encouraging the villagers to send their children to schools, fine the ones who would not comply, inspection of schools every month and preparation of report etc were handed over to *Mamledar-Mahalkari*. It was made compulsory for the village *Patil*

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to go to school for inspection everyday and note down the attendance in his visit book with his signature.[23] In making such compulsions, Shahu intended that the scheme of primary schools should not just remain on paper but be implemented efficiently. The teachers appointed to these schools were expected to know at least a bit of English. Also before appointment, they had to pass an examination to get the job.[24]

Shahu's decisions in the context of primary education were socially significant. According to the first decision, the separate schools for untouchables in the State were closed. Untouchable children began to attend schools with the touchables.[25] The second decision related to the children of the farmers. The village farmer was not much willing to send his children to school. One reason behind this was that his children would help him on the farm. As the farmer was completely dependent on his land, he would give priority to farming over schooling. To overcome this hurdle Shahu made a concession to a village farmer's children to attend school two hours in the morning or in the evening so that they could spend rest of the time on the farm- (July 1919).[26] This speaks of how flexible and realistic the education policy of the Maharaja was.

While implementing the scheme of free and compulsory education, Shahu had thought of making highschool education up to matriculation free for poor children. One of his orders testifies to this. The order of March 25, 1918 says the unspent funds after expenditure on primary education are not to be spent on any other activity but, "the savings would be utilized to provide high school education free of cost to poor children of all castes in due time."[27] If Shahu were to be blessed with some more years of life he would have definitely made secondary education universally free.

In 1917-18 when the scheme of compulsory education began to be implemented, it covered 27 schools and 1296 children. Over a period of five years until the years 1921-22, the number increased to 420 and 22,007 respectively. The expenditure on this scheme also increased up to three lakhs until the year 1922.[28]

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

It would be in the scheme of things to take notice of the efforts Shahu made for encouraging women's education. The attitude of the State of Kolhapur towards women's education was fundamentally unorthodox and modern. After Miss Little, the British Education Officer, who returned to England , Shahu had appointed in her place an intelligent lady, Rakhmabai Kelavkar who was a teacher in the female training school of Kolhapur. Rakhmabai did a laudable job of increasing the pace of women's education in the State. There were already co-education schools in the State; now separate girls' schools were also set up. Particularly during the early years of Shahu's reign, girls' schools were set up in the backward areas such as Bhudargad adjacent to the Sahyadri ranges.[29] Where separate girls' schools were non-existent, boys and girls learned together. Girls were especially encouraged to go to schools and learn with the boys. In order to encourage the teachers to take special interest in training girls they were given special rewards in proportion of the number of girls that passed examinations in co-education schools.[30] Shahu took interest in education of adult women too. He gazetted a special order particularly for the

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women of backward castes who wished to learn. The Darbar was to arrange the lodging and boarding of such women free of cost.[31] The Darbar had also set up special scholarships to encourage promising girls for further learning. The Chhatrapati, at the time of Princess Akkasaheb's wedding had started five scholarships of Rs. 40 each to girls who topped in the annual examination of IV standard.[32]

Shahu had adopted a liberal attitude as regards the higher education of girls as well.[33] It was Shahu who sent Krishnabai, the daughter of Rakhmabai Kelavkar, to the Grant Medical College in Mumbai, made her a doctor, and appointed her as a senior medical officer in the Edward Memorial Hospital in Kolhapur. Soon Krishnabai went to England for advanced studies on Shahu's encouragement and financial assistance. She returned highly qualified and joined the services of the State once again. The fact that at the Poona session of the Indian National Congress of the year 1895, Krishnabai and her sister Dwarkabai were present as volunteers on instructions from Shahu is worth a special mention.[34]

Shahu's concepts of personality development of women had crystalised when the occasion of imparting education to his widowed daughter-in- law Indumatidevi arose. He took the bold decision of educating her in the teeth of vehement opposition from the royal family itself and implemented it at the Sontali Camp.[35] Shahu took great pains to make out of Indumatidevi a complete, cultured, and self-reliant personality. He had dreamt that she should become a scholar, get higher medical education, become a doctor, and serve the poor rayats of the State. Unfortunately, his dream could not be realised because of his untimely death.

Meanwhile in 1918, Shahu shocked everyone by suddenly making a decision to close down the famous Rajaram College of Kolhapur. He elaborately explained the reasons behind his decision saying that it was the main duty of every progressive government to provide elementary education to its subjects with priority and the huge expenditure incurred on this college was obstructing elementary education. Actually, it had been decided that the three *Jahagirdars* namely Ichalkaranjikar, Vishalgadkar and Bavdekar would contribute a certain amount towards the expenses of the college. However, these *Jahagirdars* had stopped this funding since the accession of Shahu to the throne. Under these circumstances Shahu did not want the Darbar alone to bear annual expenditure of Rs.20,000 on this college alone. This decision was opposed by the editors of *Kesari* and other opponents of Shahu. Even the British Government expressed its displeasure and Kolhapur's relations with the British were strained. The Rajaram College had become the main centre of higher education for non-Brahmin communities of south Maharashtra. It was also responsible for development of various caste hostels in Kolhapur. Closure of the college would affect all this adversely and would prove a strategic blunder. Fortunately, on reviewing these possible repurcussions, Shahu wisely retracted and handed the management of Rajaram High School and Rajaram College over to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, an institution of the Arya Samaj from the United Provinces. Moreover, he agreed to an annual grant of Rs. 20,000 towards the expenses of the two institutions. Later, much owing to Shahu's efforts, the Rajaram College acquired the status of 'A' grade college from Bombay University.[36] The doors of higher education remained

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open for the non-Brahmins as the blunder that Shahu was about to commit inadvertently was avoided in time.

SANSKRIT COLLEGE, SCHOLARSHIPS , DONATIONS.....

In 1917, Shahu launched a novel experiment of setting up a Sanskrit college under the guidance of the Shankaracharya of Karveer. In July of that year, Shahu had appointed the eminent scholar and pundit, Dr. Kurtkoti as the Shankaracharya of the Karveer Math. The views of the new Shankaracharya were modern, pprogressive and unconventional. He refuted untouchability. Shahu hoped to further his mission of social reforms with support from the new Shankaracharya. Soon after Dr. Kurtkoti assumed the post, both decided to start the Sanskrit college for students of all castes. Accordingly, The 'Chhatrapati College' began functioning from 29th of July. Shahu donated the buildings of erstwhile leper asylum and adjacent lands at Unchgaon for future expansion of the college.[37] Shahu's idea was to provide a facility for Sanskrit education to non-Brahmin children. The experiment failed mainly because the Shankaracharya Dr. Kurthkoti soon began to show his real teeth. Contrary to his earlier reputation of a progressive scholar, he began to take extremely orthodox stands on issues like untouchability, widow remarriage etc. and joined hands with the Tilak party in opposition to Shahu on the issue of Kulkarni Watan. Shahu was sadly disappointed in him and was left with no option but to make Dr. Kurtkoti relinquish the seat of Shankaracharya- (November 1918). With him, the Sanskrit college project was also shelved.

We have already seen that Shahu had allotted an amount of Rs. 20,000 from the earnings of temple institutions as an outlay for primary education. In this context the order issued by him referring to a charitable food distribution outlet at Pandharpur is interesting. It says, "....The monthly expenses incurred by the charitable refectory of the Karveer Government at Pandharpur is Rs.112 and 8 annas. It seems the amount is not being spent properly as was agreed earlier. As endowment of knowledge is the greatest of all donations, it is essential to spend money towards that end. As such this refectory be closed down from October 1920 and the amount of Rs. 112 and annas 8 be disbursed every month to the 'Maratha Vidya Prasarak Mandal' and they utilize part of amount to set up one Maratha Boarding for students and Rs.30 be spent every month to manage the affairs of untouchables' hostel."[38] Shahu's decision to spend funds on the Maratha and untouchable students' hostels rather than on inefficiently run charitable refectories was remarkably unconventional. When opponents raised a hornet's nest over this, he replied, "The accusation that I have stopped the religious endowment to the temple of Pandharpur is false. I have continued with that donation as before. However, I am using it to encourage learning instead of maintaining lazy and sluggish people. For, the donation is being used to aid the needy students."[39]

Like Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, Shahu Maharaja also appears to have helped with scholarships and donations to promising non-Brahmin students who wished to go for advanced studies. The examples of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur P.C.Patil have acquired historical fame in this regard. Besides, quite a few orders related to financial aid extended by Shahu to many students are available. Among them, the

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assistance to Principal Tawde for his advanced learning in America and that to Bhai Madhaorao Bagal for his training at J.J school of Arts should be particularly noted. Tawde, eventually became a renowned educationist whereas Bagal grew to become a famous artist, social reformer and a leader.[40] Also the record of Shahu's assistance to one student in 1914 and three students in 1920 for higher studies in America is available.[41] Scholarships were meant for advanced learning in Arts, Law, Technology and Medicine.[42] Shahu is seen generously providing scholarships and donations to students and institutions not only in his State but even outside the State. For example, in Madras he had started Dr. Nayar Memorial Scholarship with a donation of Rs.5,000 in the memory of the great non-Brahmin leader Dr. Nayar. Outside the State Shahu had profusely funded institutions such as the Deccan Education Society, Shri Shivaji Maratha Society, Tarabai Maratha Boarding (Poona),Shri Udaji Maratha Boarding, Somvamshiya Samaj Boarding (Nasik), Chokhamela Boarding(Nagpur), Banaras Hindu University (Kashi)etc.[43] In short, Shahu tried to assist in all possible ways the national movement for education with zest and commitment.

The results of the unconventional and dynamic education policy of Shahu began to fructify in his reign itself. We have already seen how the number of primary school students went on increasing. In 1894, at the time of the coronation of Shahu, the total number of all students in the State, excluding the college students, was 10,844. In 1922, it became 27,830. At the same time, the number of untouchable students increased from 234 to 2,162. The number of untouchables increased nine fold. The number of college students increased from 79 to 265. In 1894, only six out of the 79 students were non-Brahmins. In 1922 the number of non-Brahmins had risen to 100. During this period, the number of Brahmin students, excluding the college students, rose from 2522 to 2722,an increase of only 200. Shahu's biographer Latthe has stated, "This means that the rate of literacy among Brahmins before Shahu's accession was so high that even after 28 years there was no scope for a rise of more than 200."[44]

The results of Shahu's educational policy were not confined to the State of Kolhapur or to the duration of his reign alone. Taking inspiration from his work many education propagators from *Karmveer* Bhaurao Patil to Dr.Panjabrao Deshmukh continued the movement of empowering the non-Brahmin community all over Maharashtra for about half a century. They established hundreds of primary schools, high schools, and colleges and laid the canals of the Ganges of Knowledge to the shanties of the lowly rayats. The result was an unprecedented development of the non-Brahmin society in Maharashtra. What is more, this class also acquired the progressive social instinct of Shahu. We would do well not to forget that the roots of all this progress are in his thoughts and deeds.

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18.

BRAHMIN BUREAUCRACY

The dictionary meaning of bureaucracy is 'a system of government in which most decisions are taken by state officials'. In common parlance, the word officialdom is used for the term bureaucracy. Whoever might be the political ruler, it is the administrative officers who exercise power over the people and enjoy its benefits as they wish. As such, it is generally called as *nokarshahi* or officialdom.

AMBIT OF BRAHMIN BUREAUCRACY

In the 19th century British became the political rulers of India, but it was the administrative officers who exercised power over common people. The top officers such as collectors, commissioners, high court judges were all British but the administrative machinery of the government officers and clerks that worked below them belonged to the class of Brahmins. The common man would have to deal not with the collector or the judge but with the village *Kulkarni* or the *Mahal Mamledar*. For the *rayat*, Kulkarni-mamledar alone were the representatives of the government; rather they were the political masters who exercised power over them. Jotiba Phule has termed such officialdom alias bureaucracy as Brahmindom or Brahminocracy. Describing the power of this Brahminocracy in one of his *Abhangas* he says,

"Your power O Queen | In Hindustan is not awake
Open your eyes | See everywhere Braminshahi
Kulkarni in village | Is master of the pen
Mahalkari in a Mahal | Like eight officers in one.
Mamledar is but *Yama** | Punishes *Shudras* no end
Before cunning *chitins* | What are poor collectors
Offices of the revenue | Full of Brahmin officers
*Bhat*** brothers all over | *Kunbi* has no savior
Help, O Queen | Save from officers evil !
Thus beseeches Joti"[1]

Shahu appears to have used the word bureaucracy for Brahmin officialdom or

* Hindu God of death
** Brahmin

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Brahminocracy in many of his personal letters as well as public addresses. In a letter written to Babasaheb Ambedkar and referred to earlier, the Maharaja has used adjectives such as tyrannical, forceful, and despotic to describe the Brahmin bureaucracy that destroyed the spirit of the untouchable community. However, what Shahu meant by Brahmin bureaucracy was not just the manifestation of the Brahmin autocracy in the shape of Brahmin officialdom. He has put forth a comprehensive, all encompassing concept of the Brahmin supremacy by calling Brahmin bureaucracy as the hegemony of the Brahmins over the non-Brahmin common masses in all aspects of life such as religious, social, political etc. He has clarified this concept in 1918 addressing a workers' gathering in Bombay.

According to Shahu, the monopoly of the Brahmin class was a distinguishing feature of this bureaucracy. He says that destruction of this monopoly accompanied by a few drops of nectar of knowledge would alone ensure the usefulness of political rights granted by the British Government to the backward classes.. Rather if these rights are conferred in the prevailing conditions, they would accrue to Brahmin caste alone, thus creating a well-educated native bureaucracy of Brahmins. He says, "I absolutely do not approve the removal of power from the British officers and its devolution on the well educated minority class of Brahmins. What does the history from the times of Parshuram till date tell? It is extremely difficult to forget how the Brahmin bureaucracy has maintained the monopoly on education depriving others of it methodically and reduced them to a position of slaves here in the South....a large chunk of the *rayat* has remained ignorant, a few have acquired knowledge and if the people are endowed with rights they will be grabbed by these few thereby creating a native bureaucracy. We are well acquainted with the rule of this educated bureaucracy. We do not have to go too far. A look at the Maratha history would suffice. The Eighteenth Century Shahu's* error gave the Peshwas opportunity to usurp more and more power. As a result, the Chhatrapati had to suffer imprisonment, caste discriminations intensified, caste jealousies increased and the untouchables were compelled to move around with a pot around the neck and a fesati** around the loin. The repetition of these circumstances anywhere would do no good. Therefore, before giving rights it is essential to educate the people of all classes."[2]

To illustrate the working of native bureaucracy Shahu has given one more example of the rule of Peshwas, that of the Pratapsingh Maharaja of Satara. As a child Pratapsingh was banned from reading and writing by the Peshwa. His mother engaged a Brahmin teacher to teach him stealthily at midnight. Later the Brahmins were annoyed when after the end of Peshwai and commencement of British Rule, Pratapsingh tried to retrieve his Kshatriya rights and reduce the hegemonic importance acquired by the Brahmins. They conspired against him, created misunderstandings in the minds of the British and got him deposed. Shahu continues in the same vein, "....Today they are trying to scare me with the same bogey. However, I would continue following my duties peacefully with faith in the justice of God and the British Government and the sympathies of patriot friends."[3] At another place the Maharaja has said that if this bureaucracy succeeded in establishing its

* The Grandson of Shivaji the Great, Shahu I
** A mass of lopopings from throny bushes

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hegemony on him, he will hand over the affairs of the state to his grown-up son and spend his life in the service of the backward people; that was his pledge, he said.[4] Shahu had mentally prepared himself to suffer imprisonment in case it came his way as a result of machinations of this bureaucracy![5]

A scrutiny of the lives of Phule or Shahu clearly shows that these two great men had to spend their entire life fighting the Brahmin bureaucracy. In this struggle, Mahatma Phule was ill-equipped to attack the opposition and bring it to terms. A sharp, piercing pen was the only weapon he had.. The other means like awakening of the masses, spread of education would only increase the strength of his party. It was different with Shahu. He wielded political power and had means to cut wings of the Brahmin bureaucracy. He could destroy the monopoly of Brahmins in the field of learning and government services on the strength of this power alone. It was this power that made it possible for him to give the backward classes social rights equal to Brahmins. Shahu was successful in destroying the total hegemony of the Brahmin bureaucracy at least in the limited sphere of his State. Out of the many bold steps he took to achieve this end, the one of confiscating the *watan* of the Kulkarni had created a large outcry in the whole of Maharashtra.

CONFISCATION OF KULKARNI WATAN

The *Watandar* Kulkarni of every village was a powerful bastion of the fort of the Brahmin bureaucracy. He would be the only person almost in every village who could read and write. Patil in theory was considered the king of the village but owing to his illiteracy and ignorance, the affairs of the village were concentrated in the person of the Kulkarni. He looked after the revenue of the village, its records, records of land registration, correspondence with the government head office etc. As he was the authorized representative of the government in the village, *rayat* thought that the government speaks from his mouth. As he was the only person who could read and write, all villagers would execute all their affairs with his assistance and in his presence. At some places, the Kulkarni would also double as a moneylender and in such cases, he would squeeze the poor *rayat* in his clutches until they were ruined. During this period the great *Satyashodhak* leader Mukundrao Patil, the editor of journal *'Dinmitra'*, had published a satire in poetry called *Kulkarni Leelamrut*. In it he had exposed the many conspiratorial activities the Kulkarni was notorious for. Satyashodhak activist Vitthal Donay was its publisher while Bhaskarrao Jadhav had written the foreword. This weapon of exploding social chicanery in the shape of poetic compilation was dedicated to Raghunathrao Sabnis, Diwan of Kolhapur State, and this whole effort was inspired and economically assisted by Shahu.

The satirical but pungent criticism in the *Kulkarni Leelamrut* annoyed the Brahmin bureaucracy. The chief spokesperson of this bureaucracy N.C. Kelkar wrote two editorials in *Kesari*. To begin with he first praised the poetic qualities, the flow of ideas, lucidity, and purity of language and later scathingly attacked the motive behind writing the book. He writes, "This poetry is poison in the guise of nectar arrived here to perform some satanic act. This is a sweet and spicy liquor of Brahmin hatred brewed in the brewery of Satyashodhak Samaj and available at a price of three *anas* a bottle out of kind mercies of Shahu Maharaja."[6]

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Actually, the description of activities of the Kulkarnis made by Patil was quite realistic at that time. In his foreword Bhaskarrao Jadhav has said, "Mukundrao is a *watandar* Patil. He has had the bitter experience of the psalms of Kulkarni. As he has a keen observation, he is well acquainted with the acrobatics of the Kulkarnis at other places as well. There are ten chapters to this collection. Seven describe the various excursions and none is imaginary. Some are the experiences of Mukundrao himself while others are the experiences of his friends and relations."[7]

Shahu was of the opinion that the village Kulkarni was proving a big obstacle in his efforts to bring down the Brahmin bureaucracy and particularly in the amelioration of the backward classes. In a letter to Robertson, the Home Secretary of the Bombay Government, Shahu writes, "You know very well how much power a Kulkarni commands in a village and why he readily works on so trifle an amount of wages. He makes lot of money out of his conspiracies and there are many unwholesome ways in which he makes money. He knows that the villagers are ignorant and therefore, totally dependent upon his mercy. However, if the villagers are taught to read and write all his domination would come to an end. Naturally, he is antagonistic to the scheme of compulsory free education that I have begun. He is also very well aware that I am helping the British Government to contain Brahmincal conspiracies."[8]

In a letter to the Governor Lord Sydenham, Shahu has said that the British Government was well aware of the skills of the Kulkarni. The foundation of the might of the Tilak party is the Kulkarni. The destruction of the Kulkarni *watans* would be the end of the Brahmin domination in the village. That was why the activists of Tilak's Homerule party were vehemently attacking him (Shahu).[9]

Shahu is seen making an open allegation that the Kulkarnis not only harass the poor *rayat* but also carry out activities of sedition against the State of Kolhapur and the British Government. He has made many allegations against the Kulkarni in an official minute. Some of these are: to repeatedly attempt, taking undue advantage of his position in a village, to incite the *rayat* to rise (in revolt) against me and the British Government, to propagate in the State the extremism prevalent in the British India by reading out newspapers to the villagers in the village office, to collect funds from the ignorant villagers to publicize treacherous objectives, to attack me bitterly in newspapers like *Loksangraha, Lokshahi, Rajkaran, Kesari* etc. in order to corrupt people's minds against me etc.[10] As such, it becomes clear that motivation behind the abolition of the Kulkarni *watan* was explicitly social and political.

On 28th of February, the declaration of the confiscation of Kulkarni Watan in the State of Kolhapur was published. Shahu has stated the obstacle of the Kulkarni in the establishment of the Grampanchayats as the immediate reason. The declaration reads, "Knowledge is being disseminated among the *rayat* and the time has come to endow the *rayat* with greater rights. In the States of Bikanner, Travancore the subjects are given Grampanchayats. His Highness thinks to follow suit in his state. However, the *watandar* Kulkarni is a big obstacle in this path. Kulkarni *watan* might have been essential perhaps when the society was in a state of ignorance. But now the times have changed. With *watandar* Kulkarni in office,

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if a Grampanchayat is established all power would concentrate in his person and his few caste brethren and this would certainly harm the interests of the larger society of the farmers. As *watandar* Patil is part of this farming community, he is not likely to endanger the course of the Grampanchayat. If Grampanchayats are to be made a success, the system of the *watandar* Kulkarni must be dismantled. As such, henceforth, this system be closed down and *Talathi** be appointed on wages, and village affairs handed over to him."

"Most of the Kulkarnis that are active today do not have accreditation. They are working according to the right of easement. The *watandar* has no right over the *watan* land. He has a right only to its enjoyment until he is in the employment. However his Highness wishes not to appropriate the lands in the possession of the Kulkarni but to generously let him keep those for himself. In addition, they would be given complete ownership rights over the land which they do not own right now. At present they cannot mortgage their land nor can they sell, gift or bequeath it vide a will. However, they would be allowed all such transactions once they obtain the *rayatwari* rights. Securing such rights is for them an advantage."[11]

In this way, the declaration intended to replace the *watandar* Kulkarni in the village with the wage earner *Talathi*. Actually as soon as the *watan* was confiscated, the *watani* lands should have accrued to the government. However, the Maharaja refused to be vindictive towards the Kulkarni and generously made him the owner of the land by converting it into *Rayatwa.*** Moreover he absolved them of the peculiar 'presents' that otherwise had to be paid for such conversion of the status land.[12] However, the anguish at the confiscation of the *watan* was so intense among the Kulkarnis and their supporter the Brahmins, that they did not express the slightest of gratitude to Shahu for his generosity.

To know the mind of the British Government on the subject, Shahu had suspended for some time the order issued for the confiscation of the Kulkarni *watan*. It was finally implemented in July. Meanwhile, the Karveer Shankaracharya Dr. Kurtkoti who was until then Shahu's supporter, came under the influence of the Brahmin bureaucracy and openly sided with the Kulkarnis. The first meeting of the *watandar* Kulkarnis was held under the presidency of Shankaracharya in his monastery. He began to correspond with the Maharaja on behalf of the Kulkarnis.[13] A long reply by Shahu to one of his letters is available. Shahu has made intellectual arguments to justify his stand.

The important points from that arguement are -1) the order relating to the Kulkarni *watan* has nothing to do with the Brahmin-non-Brahmin conflict. This conflict is quite old. 2) Though the Kulkarni *watan* is confiscated, their lands have been retained. As such, they would not suffer economically. 3) Previously, the Kulkarni risked the appropriation of his income by the government in case he erred. Now he stands no such risk. Isn't this a gain? 4) As a matter of fact, the job of village accountancy is not a quality job. The involvement of highly qualified men like the Kulkarnis in such low-grade engagements is not beneficial for either them or the society. As such, they should make use of their brains in other fields for the betterment of the society. 5) The other people from the family of the Kulkarnis

* Revenue officer in village appointed by government on wages.
** Land-tax upon peasantry

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who are not employed in this *watan* job have excelled in society out of their independent capabilities. 6) Besides, freeing the Kulkarnis of such a petty job would only lead to the increase in the radiance of their Brahmanism. 7) Actually the Kulkarnis are lamenting not for their *watans* or for economic losses but because the bureaucratic power is slipping out of their hands. 8) The present times are that of the obliteration of all types of bureaucracy. Isn't it befitting the circumstances that not only the brahmins but also the kings and aristocrats must prepare to abdicate their power? 9) Even the British Government without paying heed to its official bureaucracy has vested Indian people with rights.[14]

At the end of this letter, Shahu has annexed a note making a request to the Shankaracharya. It is very important from the social point of view. It says, "Execution of social reforms rests with the Swami (Shankaracharya). The Swami must initiate some movement to that effect. It is a pity that the bureaucracies of Brahmin, Marathas etc. regard the untouchable castes who are our compatriots pettier than dogs and cats. Therefore, I desire that the Swami should take pains to establish that (all) human beings have humanness."[15] Here Shahu has not only expressed his expectation that the Shankaracharya should strive to impart humanness to humans but also alluded to the Maratha bureaucracy along with Brahmin bureaucracy. He has also propagated that just like the Brahmin bureaucracy, the Maratha bureaucracy that refuses to recognize the untouchables as human beings too should be obliterated!

To conclude, Shahu has not used the word bureaucracy in a limited sense. According to Shahu, any social system that created a monopoly taking advantage of its special rights and privileges, established its hegemony on the rest and exploited the weaker sections was a bureaucracy. Its form might be social, religious, or political depending upon the circumstances. In this age of liberty, equality and fraternity, the decadence of such bureaucracies is in keeping with the times. Shahu has not made his monarchy an exception. He was fully aware that in due course, sooner or later, his monarchy would be wiped out and he would have to give democratic rights to the people. In this regard, he even appears to have made statements publicly.[16]

FALSE ALLEGATIONS OF BRAHMIN HATRED

Shahu spent his entire life fighting the Brahmin bureaucracy to gain social and political rights for the backward classes. During the struggle, the Brahmin class turned hostile towards him – just like on Phule - and accused him of nursing hatred towards Brahmins. However, it won't be out of place to discuss how false this allegation was on the strength of contemporary documents. Many scholars until date have asserted that Shahu was inimical not towards the Brahmins but their Brahmanism. Much corroborative evidence is available to support this view. It can be found in the various speeches he delivered as also in the administrative orders he issued.

Shahu had tremendous respect for liberal and reformist Brahmin leaders namely Justice Ranade, Gokhale and Agarkar. It is on records that on many occassions Shahu discussed issues of social reforms with Ranade and Gokhale and took their advice. Admiring the liberalism of these Brahmin leaders in his presidential

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address delivered at the Non-Brahmin Social Conference in Hubli he says, "We should congratulate and thank the Brahmins many times for their preservation of learning and saving the flame of knowledge from being extinguished. However, if liberal Brahmins such as Ranade, Gokhale, Agarkar were to exist in those times they would certainly have disseminated knowledge, the selfish practice of keeping others deprived of education that began would be averted, the division between Brahmins and non-Brahmins would be non-existent and this occasion of convening a separate conference of the non-Brahmins would not have arrived."[17] Gokhale expired in 1915. Shahu had so much respect for his social accomplishments that the State of Kolhapur declared public mourning on that day and kept all government offices and schools closed to offer condolences.[18]

Poona was the main centre of the Brahmin bureaucracy. The Brahmin class there used to campaign against Shahu that he was a Brahmin hater. Newspapers in Poona had perverted one of his speeches delivered in the conference of the backward castes and called him the mastermind of the conspiracy to thwart the progress of the Brahmin caste. Answering this allegation in another public meeting Shahu said, "Many people from the city of Poona have made allegations against me that I observe caste partiality and pull my caste to the fore. I explicitly assert that this is utterly false. It is impossible for me to behave in such a mean way that would bring disrepute to the name or the throne of Shivaji the Great. After ascending the throne, I made many efforts to ameliorate the backward castes. However, that does not mean that I hate Brahmins. Many Brahmins are my confidants, officers and advisers. I have granted *inams* to many Brahmins and desired for the betterment of their caste as well."[19]

During the reign of Shahu, the proportion of Brahmin-non-Brahmins in the employment of the State was as below: at the time of his coronation in 1894 out of the 71 employees in the administration, 67 were Brahmins, while four were non-Brahmins. In 1922, at the end of his reign out of the 95 employees 36 were Brahmins while 59 were non-Brahmins. In 1894, the total employees in his personal service were 53 out of which 46 were Brahmins while seven were non-Brahmins. Later on the number of non-Brahmins in his personal service also increased. In 1922 out of the 152 employees, 43 were Brahmins whereas 109 were non-Brahmins.[20] The rise in the number of the employment of the non-Brahmins was natural since the amelioration of the non-Brahmins was the policy of the King. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the number of Brahmin workforce remained substantial. Though it was not impossible for Shahu to reduce their number drastically, he did not follow that path. Rather he had appointed Brahmin officers on many important posts in the administration such as his personal secretary, chief of police, chief justice, junior judeges, director of education, women education officer, chief of technical school, jailor, state pleader, and Darbar surgeon etc.[21] The founder of the Vidhyapeeth High School, V.D Tophkhane and Gundopant Pishvikar, appointed to the special post of Dharmadhikari, were Brahmins who were his confidantes. Shahu took their counsel in many religious and social matters. He had devolved this same Pishvikar with the task of bringing about 100 intercaste marriages between the States of Kolhapur and Indore.

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Shahu had warm affection for Tophkhane. When the personal secretary delayed the grant of land to his school, Shahu took the initiative, stood in scalding sun for six hours, and made available the land to Tophkhane.[22] The qualities of Tophkhane such as loyalty towards the master, love for learning, honesty, affability, selfless nature had enamored the Maharaja. When the latter came to know that he had incurred debts because of his selfless nature, Shahu issued an order. It says, "As Tophkhane is our (friend) and he has not tricked anyone, he shall be granted Rs. 3,000 on the bequest account. He cares for us in the same vein as Gokhale and Karmarkar . As such, it would not be fair to keep him in debts. Therefore, pay him an amount of Rs.3,000 rupees."[23]

Innumerable instances of Shahu's generous financial assistance and encouragement to Brahmins to make it great in various fields such as art, society, journalism, industry etc. can be gathered from his life. Narayan Shripad Rajhans popularly known as Balgandharva who proved to be pride of Marathi theatre was a gift by Shahu to the Marathi world of art. It was Shahu who salvaged the industrial unit of Laxmanrao Kirloskar by providing him with the old artillery guns of the Kolhapur State when during the World War it risked closure for want of raw iron.[24] These examples relate to the great names from the Brahmin class. Shahu's demeanor with common Brahmin man was also generous and based on equality. For example he issued the followed order to the Sarsubhe in 1918: "*Talathis* are being appointed. Complaint that Brahmins are not entertained has been received. It is unfair to rule out a particular caste as unfit of or not to be taken into government employment. Employment should be open for all. Take cognizance and do the needful."[25]

Two Brahmins were in service as *Shiledars* in the royal stables. When Shahu noticed that they were at discomfort at the place of work, he generously transferred them to the administrative department.

In his order he says, "*Shiledars* Moreshwar Vitthal Lokhande and Anant Dattraya Padalkar are Brahmins. They have to do rough jobs. They find it difficult to massage the horse, clean its excreta and if need be to carry the hunt's flesh. As the other *Shiledars* are Marathas and Muslims these two face a problem of food and drinks as well. As such their services are transferred to the clerk list from that of the *Shiledar* list."[26]

Some documents reveal how Shahu, after the death of Brahmin employees, would look after their desolate families. For example, a servant Sakharam Baji Kulkarni succumbed to sudden death in the epidemic of plague. His wife applied to Shahu thus, "the untimely blow has left me completely bereft of shelter. I have two children and there is no means of their protection. My husband acquired education by the good graces of Your Highness and then served the government 14 to 15 years loyally. Taking into account these facts means of livelihood should be kindly provided." Maharaja showered his tender mercies on her and started maintenance of Rs. 10 per month for her and Rs. 3 each for her children.[27]

The other example relates to State Pleader Malhar Balvant Garde. His family of six members became orphan after his death. He had a son studying in Fergusson College at Poona and two daughters of marriageable age. Under such

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circumstances, the subsistence of family became difficult. Shahu, taking into consideration that the said lawyer had served the government in a selfless fashion, started a monthly pension of Rs. 40 that comprised Rs. 10 to his wife for life and Rs.30 to his son for five years.[28] The idea of how handsome this amount was could be had if we consider that in those times, a teacher earned a monthly wage of about Rs. 10 to 12 only.

In those times the opponents of Shahu had painted a picture that he was an avowed enemy of the Brahmins, especially the Kulkarnis. On this background, how Shahu had bestowed the family of a Brahmin Kulkarni with his bounty and affection is evidenced even toady by Dada Maharaj, the chief of the Sangavdekar Kulkarni family in Kolhapur and his brothers. Even today, this Sangavdekar family considers Shahu as their God.

These examples are narrated in details because they testify that Shahu treated people of all castes and religions in his State equally. He was not inimical to the entire Brahmin class nor was he partial in his treatment towards them only because he was at loggerheads with the Brahmin bureaucracy. He never parted with his prudence as a ruler that even though he was a Maratha by caste, as a king he belonged to all his subjects. We see a lot many accomplished Brahmins such as the transcendent scholar Rajaramshastri Bhagwat, the renowned lawyer of Sangli Ganesh Raghunath Abhyankar, the liberal Jahagirdar of Kurundwad Balasaheb Patwardhan admire and love Shahu Maharaja because of this judicious discretion.

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19.

ARYA SAMAJ

Shahu Chhatrapati used many means in his struggle against the Brahmin bureaucracy. The political power, he had at his disposal on account of being a Chhatrapati, was one such means. Similarly, the organizations such as the Arya Samaj, the Satyashodhak Samaj etc. committed to the movements of religious reforms were some of his other means. As these organizations challenged the domination of the Brahmins in the society and their monopoly in the religious affairs, Shahu was quite naturally attracted towards them and they received his royal patronage.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE ARYA SAMAJ

Shahu had quite early in his life come into contact with the Arya Samaj. He was a student then. During the period before coronation in 1882 when he was on a study tour of North India, the Arya Samaj of Mathura had presented him a plaque of honour.[1] However, he was truly exposed to the philosophy and the mode of operation of the Samaj in 1902. That year while on his way to England to attend the ascension ceremony of King Edward VII he met the Maharaja of Idar Sir Pratapsingh. Sir Pratapsingh had come to the throne of Idar from the house of the Rathods of Jodhpur, his original dynasty. He had accepted the Arya Samaj. Shahu and Sir Pratapsingh would discuss a number of issues during their long sea voyage. The Arya Samaj would be one important topic of their discussion. Later, remembering this discussion in a public address Shahu said that Pratapsinghji had explained to him the views of the Arya Samaj. He also had some meetings with Pandit Atmaram the propagandist of the Arya Samaj in Baroda. Shahu was more and more attracted towards the Samaj because of these meetings and eventually it culminated in his acceptance of the Samaj.[2]

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati had established the Arya Samaj in Mumbai in 1875. Arya Samaj recognized Vedic texts as the authorised religious texts of the Hindu religion and vehemently championed the Vedic philosophy and Vedic culture. Even then, the Brahmins of Maharashtra who were boastful of Vedas were opposed to the Samaj. This was so because the Arya Samaj was against the monopoly, the Brahmins had established

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over the Vedas. The Arya Samaj propounded that everyone including the women and Shudras had a right to the recitation of the Vedas. Moreover, it strongly deplored the practice of caste discrimination and untouchability based on birth and advocated reforms such as women's education and remarriage. Even the great reformers of Maharashtra like Lokhitwadi, Justice Ranade were influenced by the progressive views of the Arya Samaj. In 1875 when Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati was in Poona for a halt, the reformers had honored him taking him around in a procession over an elephant. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule had also joined this procession. At the same time, the ultra puritans in Poona had taken a decorated donkey in procession with slogans 'long live Swami Gardabhanand'* to ridicule Swami Dayanand. Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, the leader of the traditionalists, derisively referred to Dayanand as 'the splendor arisen for the amelioration of the Shudra castes such as *Mahar, Maang* etc.' and heaped scorn on him vehemently in his journal *Nibandhmala*.[3]

WHY ARYA SAMAJ ?

Shahu was a child at that time. Later, after the demise of Maharshi Dayanand in 1883, the Arya Samaj spread over North India in large areas. The Samaj created a huge movement of national redemption through the establishment of many a social and educational institution. It advocated many religious reforms, awakened the cultural soul of the Hindus, and helped national resurrection. At a time when Shahu turned his attention towards the task of social reforms, Arya Samaj had already crystallized into a major social and religious movement of a national character. In 1902 when Sir Pratapsingh introduced Shahu to the philosophy of Arya Samaj for the first time, the vedokta episode was already simmering in Kolhapur. The class of the orthodox Brahmins of not only Kolhapur but all over Maharashtra had declared the Chhatrapati as *Shudra* and refused him the right of *Vedokta.* On this background, it was natural for Shahu to feel affinity for the Arya Samaj which advocated the right to Vedas for everyone belonging to the Hindu religion including women and the *Shudras*. However, he does not seem to have accepted the Samaj in haste. It appears that his affection for the Arya Samaj was in a dormant state for many more years. Later in 1916-17 when he began to take decisive steps against the Brahmin bureaucracy and in turn, the Brahmin bureaucracy began to attack him forcefully, he advocated the cause of Arya Samaj and declared his affection for the Samaj explicitly.

In this regard, a letter that Shahu wrote to his British friend Robertson is important. He says, "I am supporting The Satyashodhak Samaj and the Arya Samaj for one more reason. By heart, I am an Arya Samajist and even if I do not openly profess it, I love their principles. Brahmins have treated me badly and especially after my address at the Khamgaon Conference (December 27, 1917). The way they behaved with me has given me a fresh reason to overtly acknowledge my love for the principles of the Arya Samaj. The Samaj teaches us commitment to the Vedas and not to the Puranas. For, Puranas are imaginary tales fabricated by Brahmins during the period after the Vedas were written. The Maharaja of Idar Sir

* Gardabhanand is donkey.

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Pratapsinghji and I have contemplated on these principles many times and we share the same opinion on this subject."[4] Shahu adds in the same letter, "The principles of the Arya Samaj teach equality of men and ask to throw off the religious monopoly of the Brahmins."[5]

The slogan of the Arya Samaj 'Vedas for all' was based on the sublime principle of equality of human beings and this principle was the main reason behind Shahu's attraction for the Samaj. In his presidential address at the convention of the Arya Samaj held in Navsari he says, "Shri Swami Dayanandji propounded that every human being has right to Vedas and increased the spread of Vedic knowledge in North India. Millions of people joined the Arya Samaj and they established educational institutions such as Gurukuls, high schools, colleges etc. The propagation that every one has right to the Vedas led to a consciousness of equality and a kind of quality life. The teachings of Swami Dayanand spread fast in the north but to the south of the Narmada they began to be strongly opposed. This is due to the strength of the Brahmin bureaucracy here. When Brahmin bureaucracy heard Swamiji's thoughtful speeches during his brief sojourn in Poona it realized that the views of the Arya Samaj were poison for them and to oppose the procession of the Swami the rogue idea of parading *'Gardabhanand'* Saraswati originated in their mind."[6]

Human equality was the declared principle of the Arya Samaj. In the Vedic culture and the social system the Arya Samaj had in mind, there was no place for caste discriminations and untouchability. Naturally, a reformist king like Shahu felt it was a strong means of destroying caste discrimination. In a letter to Montagu, he has expressed his hope that in spite of its religious foundation the Arya Samaj espoused social equality and therefore this organization was likely to effectively fight the Brahmin bureaucracy and prepare the non-Brahmin lay society for the impending democracy.[7]

Before Shahu took to the open espousal of the Arya Samaj and established it in Kolhapur, he had extended royal patronage to the Satyashodhak Samaj and restored it in 1911. After this restoration, Shahu inspired and contributed vastly to the work undertaken by the Satyashodhak Samaj; its details would be discussed later. The point to be noted here is that Shahu did not think it fit to depend on the Satyashodhak Samaj alone to fight the tyranny of the Brahmin bureaucracy. According to him, though the Satyashodhak Samaj had succeeded in exposing the dark side of the Brahmin autocracy it had failed to overthrow its tyrannical rule. He thought that to fight the Brahmin autocracy, assistance of one more supportive organization like the Arya Samaj was required;. especially, he felt, the radicals in the Samaj who ardently fought the Brahmins hegemony would be useful in his mission. In a letter to the British Resident Woodhouse, Shahu says, "There are fanatical activists among Muslims, Arya Samajists, and Brahmins. However, I am of the opinion that to expose all the religious chicanery of the Brahmins and to check them such ardent opponents are essential. That is precisely why I am encouraging the Arya Samaj."[8] Those days, organizations such as Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj etc. were also extant in Maharashtra. However, instead of associating with them Shahu extended royal patronage to the Arya Samaj. Maharshi Shinde had accurately analyzed this act of him. He has said that the reason why Shahu was inclined more

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towards Arya Samaj than the Brahmo Samaj or the Prarthana Samaj is not the differences in their religious outlook but the fact that the followers of the Arya Samaj were more courageous at physical brawls and better organizers of people.[9]

There were two factions among the followers of the Arya Samaj. The faction of Mahatma Hansraj, Sir Pratapsingh Maharaja etc. were loyal to the British Government; while the faction of Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shraddhanand etc. was part of the national freedom movement.[10] Participation in this faction would have caused political problems and discomfort to Shahu. Naturally, he was obliged to support the faction loyal to the British Government. As a vassal, the stand taken by Shahu was in congruence with the politics of those times. The Arya Samajist leaders like Sir Pratapsingh were even fighting the First World War on the side of the British. Taking his reference Shahu writes to Woodhouse, "Satyashodhak Samaj has no base whatsoever. But the Arya Samaj rests on the foundations of Vedic texts. I am contemplating of teaching the Vedas to other castes which the Brahmins do not like .....Like Sir Pratapsingh I too believe in Vedas, and I am an admirer of the principles of the Arya Samaj. I am awaiting Sir Pratapsingh's return from the battlefield as I expect him to help me immediately as soon as he comes back. The Government is supportive of the Arya Samaj as it does not interfere with politics. Arya Samaj is a social and religious organization and the Government benefits from its use as a countercheck to the terrorists. Therefore I need the people of the Arya Samaj here in Kolhapur as well."[11] Here it is quite clear that when Shahu alludes to the Arya Samaj as the one that aids the Government he insinuates to Sir Pratapsingh faction.

ARYA SAMAJ IN KOLHAPUR

In January 1918, the Arya Samaj was established in Kolhapur under the patronage of Shahu. Pandit Atmaram helped him in this.[12] The Arya Samaj of Kolhapur had already begun its work under the guidance of Swami Parmanand who had come from Agra. Swami Parmanand had founded a primary school and a Gurukul at a village called Kerli near Kolhapur in 1917 itself. An order of the Maharaja approving an amount of Rs.5,000 towards the expenses of meals of thirty students of this Gurukul is available. In that he says, "...The food and dress of the students should be simple. We hope that with a high aim at education good citizens would come out of this boarding."[13] Soon, a first grade Anglo vernacular school of the Arya Samaj and a Gurukul adjacent to it were founded in Kolhapur as ordered by Shahu -(May 1918). Land and buildings were granted for these schools. Education in Gurukul was made free of cost. The school and the Gurukul at Kerli were also attached to this institution. All this work was devolved upon the Arya Prathinidhi Sabha from the United Provinces.[14] We have already seen that later on, Rajaram College and Rajaram High School were also handed over to this Sabha.

The students of all castes including the untouchables were allowed in the Gurukuls of the Arya Samaj. As already stated, the untouchable students were also taught Vedic literature with other students. 'Satyarthprakash', the great work of Swami Dayanand, was not a compulsory learning for students of the Gurukul alone, it was also a compulsory reading for *Talathi* and *Patil* training classes which Shahu had started. In an order issued in this context

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Shahu has said, "The ongoing classes to train the *Talathis* and *Patils* shall be conducted in the *thatti* building at Padmala and the book Satyarthprakash of the Arya Samaj shall be taught to the students for one hour at least everyday. Satyarthprakash has been included in the syllabus of *Talathi* and *Patil* examinations and it is mandatory to pass in it as the other subjects."[15]

SHAHU'S EXPECTATIONS FROM ARYA SAMAJ

It would not be out of place to see what position the Arya Samaj commanded in the thought sphere of Shahu. He has said that the doctrine of the Arya Samaj stands on the solid foundations of the Vedic texts and as everyone has great respect for the Vedas there is no doubt that the Aryan religion would spread rapidly throughout the country. He was of the opinion that India is in the processes of emerging as a nation and the Samaj is playing a very important role in the process. He says, "this country *Aryavarta* was never a nation anytime before. However, now that the British are the common political rulers everywhere, the feeling of nationality is taking shape and it is gradually increasing. The contribution of the Arya Samaj towards the increase in such feeling is commendable. Arya Samaj assimilates the Aryan people of this country irrespective of the caste or sect to which they belong. Moreover, it also assimilates the non-Aryan people within its fold and accords them all rights of an Arya including those of intermarriage and interdining."[16]

In a convention of the Arya Samaj while suggesting that Samaj should also assimilate the people even from Europe and America belonging to the Aryan race if they so desired Shahu says, " Then they (Arya Samaj) would not step back from including within their fold the Teutonic people from the Europe and American continents who, the scholars agree, belong to the Aryan Race. Earlier all Aryan people used to stay together in the arctic area. Later they had to leave that territory. Some tribes migrated towards the West and some towards the East. The mighty European nations are the progeny of those tribes that migrated westwards whereas we the people of *Aryavarta* are the offspring of the Aryas that migrated eastwards. Therefore, the Europeans and their offspring the Americans are in no way foreigners to us. The great warriors of the West such as Lord Kitchner, General French, and Marshal Fauck etc. have proved their *Kshatratej* on the battlefield. According to you they are certainly Kshatriyas and if they desire you would definitely initiate them into the Aryan religion."[17]

This means that Shahu's thinking did not stop at making the Aryan religion based on the principle of human equality the national religion of India alone. Rather he desired that the humanitarian principles of the Aryan religion should spread all over the world making it a world religion.[18] This was not a belligerent thought. It is not expressed with a desire that the Aryan religion should cut across all other religions and establish its hegemony. Shahu was dreaming of the Aryan religion as a world religion because it was a humanitarian religion. It accorded freedom for the development of individual personality and treated everyone on the footing of equality.

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20.

SATYASHODHAK SAMAJ

Mahatma Phule had established the Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873 in order to fight the absolute power of the Brahmin autocracy and restore the social and religious rights of the *Shudras* and *Ati-shudras*. However, the work of this organization slowed down after his death. One of the associates of Phule and the first leader of the workers' class Narayan Meghaji Lokhande had continued with the social work at his level. But that too had come to a standstill after his death in 1897. Much later, when the *Vedokta* controversy reverberated throughout Maharashtra, the non-Brahmin leaders and intellectuals began to feel the need of revivification of the Satyashodhak Samaj that had fought the arrogance of Brahmin autocracy. As a result the Satyashodhak Samaj was resurrected under the leadership of Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde in 1910 at Bombay. The very next year in April 1911 a convention of the Satyashodhak Samaj was organized at Poona presided over by Ramayya Ayyavaru, an associate of Phule. The main Satyashodhak leaders namely Dr. Santuji Lad, Gangadharrao Bagade, Marutirao Navle and Vasudev Birje contributed in making the convention a success. In this convention, the aims and objectives of the Samaj based on the principles as espoused by Phule were declared. Among these was the main principle of the Satyashodhak Samaj that all men are children of God and there is no need of any intermediary to appease Him. The next year's convention was held at Nasik under the auspices of Dr. Lad.[1]

SATYASHODHAK SAMAJ IN KOLHAPUR

It was improbable that the centre of the non-Brahmin activities as restless as Kolhapur would remain a silent spectator to the wind of the resurrection of the Satyashodhak Samaj that had begun to blow all over Maharashtra. It wielded within itself the capacity to give this movement its real momentum. As a result of the *Vedokta* conflict the activists here had developed the mental courage to fight the Brahmin autocracy. Home to the Satyashodhak intellectuals such as Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Annasaheb Latthe etc. and the seat of the well-wisher of the non-Brahmins Chhatrapati Shahu himself, Kolhapur was an outstandingly favorable place for resurrection of the Satyashodhak movement. Nowhere in Maharashtra, did such circumstances prevail.

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On January 11, 1911, a meeting of the Satyashodhak activists was convened in Kolhapur and 'Shri Shahu Satyashodhak Samaj' was established. In the meeting Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Annasaheb Latthe, Mahadavrao Dongre and Haribhau Chavan were elected as the President, Vice-president, Chief Officer and Secretary respectively. Jadahav, Latthe and Dongre held high posts in the employment of the Kolhapur State.[2] They could not take this initiative without Shahu's approval. That Shahu had not only given his consent but accorded active encouragement to this task becomes clear from the support he later provided to the Samaj. The Satyashodhak leaders of Kolhapur had even named their organization as 'Shri Shahu Satyashodhak Samaj'. As such, it becomes clear that Shahu himself was the inspiration behind this effort. Though the name of Shahu was associated with the Samaj, the movement later acquired fame only as 'Satyashodhak' movement.

SATYASHODHAK ACHIEVEMENTS IN KOLHAPUR

Baburao Yadav was a hardcore Satyashodhak activist from Kolhapur. He was vehement propagandist of the Satyashodhak doctrine. Having decided to bring into practice the principle of performance of religious rituals without a Brahmin priest he, on August 21, 1912, in his house performed the first *Shravni** in Kolhapur under the auspices of a Maratha priest in conformity with *Vedokta* procedure. The event created quite a hubbub among the Brahmins.. That very day about 150 non-Brahmin people of Maratha community, including Baburao Yadav and Nanasaheb Mulik, gathered to perform the special Brahminic ritual in public. At the end of this rite, a public prayer was offered to the almighty seeking to liberate the non- Brahmin's minds from the hegemonic clutches of the Brahmin priesthood! This action began to be imitated at various places in Kolhapur. People mustered courage and began to perform their religious rites without the services of Brahmin priests. Soon it was 24th September, the anniversary of the original Satyashodhak Samaj founded by Mahatma Phule. Satyashodhak activists took this opportunity to organise a public gathering and celebrated the occassion with great pomp. A resolution was passed in the meetingdeclaring that just as Protestants rebelled against the Pope of Rome who claimed to have the keys of heaven, Hindus should rebel against the Brahmin priesthood and the Shankaracharya, the self-proclaimed custodians of the keys of heaven.[3]

These events created quite a stir among both Brahmins and the non-Brahmins, which the activists had desired. Only such stirring would awaken the ignorant non-Brahmin masses, they felt. Emboldened, Satyashodhak activists now began a spree of performing rites including marriages without Brahmin priests. In Kolhapur alone in 1912, 1913 and 1914, respectively 200, 266 and 299 marriages were performed as per the Satyashodhak way.[4] Numerous other religious rites too were led by Satyashodhak activists. Indeed a wave of performing religious rites with priests of ones own caste instead of the Brahmins surged through Kolhapur and began to spread to the villages. It gave birth to the

* Shravani is a typical Brahmin ritual associated with rejuvenation of the powers of the sacred thread.

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idea of training Maratha priests. A Satyashodhak school was established in Kolhapur in 1913 under the guidance of Bhaskarrao Jadhav. Undoutedly, all these efforts were blessed by Shahu. Vitthalrao Donay, appointed as a teacher to the Satyashodhak School, was a palace employee. Two other Satyashodhak activists namely Haribhau Chavan and Shripatrao Shinde also taught in this school. Shahu would pay their wages as well. He had also provided land and building for the school. In short, the school was fully patronised by the Chhatrapati. The syllabus of the school was prepared under the guidance of Bhaskarao Jadhav. Books such as *Gharcha Purohit* or the 'Home Priest' that taught the performance of religious rites were compiled.[5]

THE COAL-TAR EPISODE

Even as the process of the resurrecting the Satyashodhak movement had gathered momentum in the State of Kolhapur, it was thwarted by what is described as the 'Tar-Episode' that erupted all of a sudden. It was the result of evil machinations by a faction in the Royal Court. Murmurs of factional intriguers in the Royal Court were heard right from 1910. Khanderao alias Balasaheb Gaikwad was the leader of one faction and Bhaskarrao Jadhav led the other. Gaikwad faction was supported by the *Sardars, Watandars* and affluent Jain merchants like Kallappanna Nitve; while the Jadhav faction comprised of many middle class Satyashodhaks such as Annasaheb Latthe and Mahadevrao Dongre. The two factions continuously fought with each other with conspiracies and machinations for domination of the Court which put Shahu many times in awkward situations. Shahu could not side with either faction as both were his associates. On this background, the awful incident of applying tar to the statues of King Edward and Queen Alexandra took place in Kolhapur at the midnight of February 14, 1914. The vandalism shocked not only the State of Kolhapur but also the Bombay Government. Its echoes were heard in the British Parliament also. This was a great blow to the position and prestige of Shahu, a vassal prince of the British Empire. As a ruler, it was his duty to find and punish the offendesrs. He declared a reward of Rs. 5,000 on the culprit.

The Gaikwad –Nitve faction seized the chance to bake their cake in the fire. They conspired to frame the Jadhav faction in this episode, accused Annasaheb Latthe to be the main culprit, and began to harass him with the aid of Brahmin police officers. So much so, that Latthe had to run for his life outside the State towards Belgaum. Bhaurao Patil who later acquired great fame as Karmaveer was then working among the people as a Satyashodhak activist. Kallappanna Nitve called him to Kolhapur and compelled him to give false evidence against Latthe. When Bhaurao, upright as he was, refused to implicate Latthe in a sham, Nitve framed him under a fake charge and put him behind bars! In the prison, he was cruelly tortured. Riding on the hot wave of the tar-episode the Gaikwad-Nitve faction was successful in gaining an advantage over the Jadhav faction but in the process the Satyashodhak movement was disgraced. The political ambience in Kolhapur seared to such over the episode that Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Annasaheb Latthe, Mahadevrao Dongre had to resign from the Satyashodhak Samaj! Though Shahu had tender feelings for the Samaj, as a ruler it became impossible for him to voice his sympathies overtly. The episode lingered on for some time and then

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faded away without apprehension of the offenders.[6] Nevertheless, the fractious intrigues of the Court gave a tremendous blow to a social movement. It took three to four years to recover from the setback. From 1916 onwards Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Latthe, Dongre etc. started participating again in the activities of the Samaj. Shahu also began to support this movement openly and this continued until the end of his reign. The Satyshodhak movement later gathered steam with participation of new and fresh leaders like Maharshi Shinde, Shripatrao Shinde, Walchand Kothari, Bhagwantrao Palekar, Mukundrao Patil etc. Meanwhile Shahu converted this movement into the non-Brahmin movement. We shall discuss that aspect later on.

SHAHU'S PATRONAGE TO SATYASHODHAK MOVEMENT

Shahu Maharaj accorded royal patronage to the Satyashodhak Samaj. That means he provided assistance in many ways direcly and indirectly to facilitate the dissemination of Satyashodhak doctrine in society. Many instances to this effect are available in the corpus of the biographical literature of Shahu. It won't be out of place to narrate a few.

Eradication of caste discrimination was one of the principles of the Satyashodhak Samaj. Shahu practised this principle in words as in deeds. In 1916, he decided to start an inn open to all castes and religions in conformation with Satyashodhak principles. He handed over this task to one of his valets Keshavrao Patil. He provided for the building and land required for this purpose and also arranged for Rs. 500 to 600 for monthly expenses. Those days, even the idea to establish such an inn was apt to invite public opprobrium. It was a bold step of social reform. Keshavrao says that at that time even the hardened Satyashodhaks had not reached the stage of inter-caste dining. At this point, the hardcore Satyashodhak in Kolhapur Baburao yadav came to his aid. He helped Patil in all possible ways to open his inn. The Satyashodhak activists that came from far away places to Kolhapur now began to get good meals in this inn.[7]

Baburao Yadav, an employee in the royal stables, was gigantic cannon of the Satayshodhak Samaj in Kolhapur. He practised what he preached. He carried out many mass-awakening campaigns with the zeal of a missionary within and without Kolhapur to propagate Satyashodhak principles. He was considered a very close confidant of the Chhatrapati. Shahu himself had voiced words of honor for him as 'resolute in words and deeds'.[8] He was a state employee only on paper. He worked as if he were a full time cadre of the Samaj. Shahu would approve him a leave of about a month or two along with travelling allowances intermittently. One such order of 1917 is available : "The *dafedar* Baburao Haibatrao Yadav has been granted a leave of two months from December 17, 1917 to fulfill his commitments towards Satyashodhak Samaj. He shall also be allotted travelling allowances."[9]

Shahu provided generous financial help to Satyashodhak Samaj from time to time. An order of August 15, 1920 records his approval and handing over of an amount of Rs.1,500 to Bhaskarrao Jadhav.[10] Another interesting record concerning Shahir Lahri Haider, a close associate of Shahu, is available. He sat next to Shahu in the horse cart everyday when the former went for a round through the city. Haider

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and his disciples would propagate the Satyashodhak message in the society through their doggerel excursions. They had even composed a few Satyashodhak *bhajans* (devotional songs). When the Maharaja heard these compositions, he granted land and material to him to construct a building as a permanent place to sing such *bhajans* - (1921).[11]

In 1920, Shahu took many decisions favorable to the mission of the Satyashodhak Samaj. The first decision was his order issued in June to perform the worship rites of various deities and the Samadhis of his ancestors in the Palace under the auspices of a Maratha priest instead of a Brahmin one. In the order he says, "....The worship rites of the deities performed by Brahmin priests render me unfit to touch the gods. Sometimes they think of us as *Kshatriya* and sometimes *Shudra*. Therefore henceforth in the New Palace all worship and sixteen *Sanskaras* are to be performed by a Maratha priest."[12] Another order fired Brahmin clerics from Patgaon establishment of the *Kshatrajagadguru** and the Jotiba temple of Wadi Ratnagiri and appointed Maratha clerics in their place-(30th December, 1920).[13]

The second decision Shahu took was establishment of special training schools to train Maratha priests. Raobahadur Mahadeorao Dongre and Mamasaheb Khanvilkar were assigned this task. Shortly on July 6, 1920, an institute called Shivaji Kshatriya Vedic School, chaired by Mamasaheb Khanvilkar and meant to provide Vedic learning came into being. To begin with, it had 14 students on its roll. By the end of the year, the number had increased to 62.[14] The third important decision was to consecrate a *Kshatrajagadguru* on the seat of Mauni Maharaj at Patgaon.** It is worth noting that even this decision was not far away from Satyashodhak principles.

Shahu's very significant contribution to the activities of the Samaj was launching of *Satyashodhak Jalsa or Tamasha,****an idea entirely inspired by him. It has been a very popular medium of entertainment and education of the ignorant masses from the villages. Shahu knew the pulse of the people and he gave the folk theatre a solid dimension of social reforms by promoting Satyashodhak values through it. He encouraged many Satyashodhak activists to form troups for performance of such *Jalsas*. Among these the troupes of Bhimrao Mahamuni, Bhaurao Patole, Tatoba Yadav, Ganpatrao More were the major performers. These men were *Shahirs*(folk poets). Shahu utilized their poetic talents for social awakening. The first show of a *Jalsa* would be performed before Shahu himself at the Sontali Camp. He would fondly take interest in the show and guide if necessary. Then the tour itinerary of the troupe would be planned. The performances of these *Jalsas* would relate to various topics such as the conceit of Brahmin priests and the loot of innocent masses by them, superstitions in the society, brutal customs like tonsure of widows, exploitation of needy masses by rich

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* High Priest of Kshatriyas like the Pope of Roman Catholic Church.

** Also called Maunibuwa alias Maunibaba, Mauni Maharaj, was a Maratha saint in the times of Shivaji the Great. The term 'Maharaj' sometimes connotes a respectful compellation to a saint.

*** Marathi folk theatre.

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merchants and moneylenders, importance of education, needless expenses on marriage ceremonies, eradication of untouchability etc. *Jalsas* performances generally had a satirical tone. The shows were light entertainment for the illiterate masses but effective tools of social instructions. The thrust of Phule's central argument that God needed no intermediary between Him and man in the form of a Brahmin priest would be emphasized. The results of this continual hammering would not but show in the villages. *Prabhodankar* Thackrey the foremost Satyashodhak thinker and journalist says, "....Because of Satyashohak Jalsa performances, villagers began to solemnize marriages merely offering garlands (bride and groom to each other). That created much outcry among the class of mendicants. Everywhere complaints were registered on the strength of *Joshi watans* against those performing such rites. Shahu, on reading these news items, started dispatching non-Brahmin lawyers to those places with expenses to fight the law suits."[15]

The district of Satara had become the stronghold of the Satyashodhak Samaj. A Satyashodhak conference presided by Mukundrao Patil was convened at Karad in early 1920. The Karad Brahmins had goaded local Brahmin Mamledar to invoke article 144 to ban the convention. To combat, the Samaj also registered a complaint with the Collector of Satara, Moyce, got the ban lifted and made the convention a success. Moyce was sympathetic to the Satyashodhaks. The chronicle *'Dinmitra'* has noted that the assistance provided by Shahu in the shape of a variety of equipments such as tents, chairs carpets etc was responsible mainly in making the convention a success.[16] During this period the activities of Satyashodhak activists Keshavrao Vichare and Bhaurao Patil were making waves in the Satara district. Especially the Satyashodhak Jalsa of Bhaurao Patil had taken the rural areas by storm and become immensely popular.[17]

In this way the Satyshodhak movement, resurrected with encouragement and assistance from Shahu widely spread in Kolhapur State and in various regions of Maharashtra like Poona, Ahemadnagar, Khandesh, Berar etc. The Satyashodhak and non-Brahmin movement activists now regarded Shahu as their inspiration. How Shahu's work had influenced even the far off areas of Maharashtra such as the Berar region can be gathered from a letter to him by the editor of *Subodhmala'*, Kashinath Bapuji Deshmukh, a non-Brahmin activist from Amravati. He writes, "I am extremely grateful to His Highness for kindly agreeing to accept the dedication of my book *Vedokta shravni and shravni puran of the Kshatriyas*.... As per annual custom this year also around 400 to 500 Maratha Kshatriyas of Berar gathered together in the office of *Subodhmala* at Amravati to celebrate *shravni.* At the function, the book of *Shravni*, complete with the dedication and photographs was distributed among all the Kshatriya people to motivate them. This book is in great demand in almost all regions of Maharashtra such as Nagpur, Berar etc. and thousands of orders have been received until date. These days the *Shravni* rite among Kshatriya community is performed according to this book and we are flooded with reports of these performances sent for publicity. At the public performance of the *Shravni* at Amravati the photographs of the Shri Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaja and Shri Shahu Chatrapati Maharaja were placed at the centre. After the performance of the rite, the

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great deeds, that His Highness has performed and is currently trying to achieve in the face of innumerable hardships in order to accomplish the pious mission of national redemption he has undertaken, through endowment of religious, social and political freedom to the non-Brahmin lay folk, were explained in detail. Finally it was hinted that there was a possibility of getting awards from His Highness for the encouragement of Kshatriya *Shravni* performance.....for the last six years with His Highness's blessings I have regularly published the monthly named *Subodhmala* as the mouthpiece of the non-Brahmin party against all hardships. I wrote an article in harsh language titled 'Crowing of Brahmins against *Shravni*. Thereupon, the Brahmins had registered a case of criminal offence against me in 1918. All the 50-60 lawyers were standing for the complainants. The only Maratha lawyer we have here was fighting the suit for me. The proceedings continued for six months. Finally when it became clear that the case was lost for them, the complainants withdrew the charges unconditionally and our party won, all with His Highness's blessings. Thenceforth *Sharavni* became immensely popular. These days *Subodhmala* has one thousand subscribers. Soon the *Vijayadashmi* issue would be published. That I would present at His Highness's service. I have a small printing press of treadle machine sufficient for publication of my monthly. I am extremely grateful to His Highness for his kind communication that we start a strong newspaper of the non-Brahmin party in Berar and his assurance of financial aid for the venture."[18]

Shahu himself performed the rite of *Shravni* regularly.[19] Many of his caste brothers in Maharashtra seem to have imitated him. Not that performance of *Shravni* by *Vedokta* method was a great reform by itself; however, it had a symbolic significance as an act of revolt against the domination of the priesthood. Such symbolic acts are essential to increase the popularity of any movement among the common people. People becoming aware of their rights even under the pretext of *Shravni* was not a mean achievement.

Shahu expired in Bombay on May 6, 1922. On May 7, 1922, last rites were performed on the banks of river Panchganga (Kolhapur). Hitherto Brahmin priests traditionally performed these rites. Maharani Laxmibai and the new Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaja courageously broke this tradition and got the rites performed by students of Shivaji Vedic School amidst recitation of Vedic mantras, a gesture befitting the cause to which Shahu had devoted his life.[20]

MOTHER FIGURE FOR THE MOVEMENT

The death of Shahu was a great blow to the Satyashodhak movement. Expressing grief on his death the great Satyashodhak leader, the editor of *Jagruti* Bhagwantrao Palekar, said, "The right hand of Satyashodhak Samaj movement and the umbrella of love and affection over the heads of the untouchables is lost."[21] A plaque of honor presented by the Satyashodhak Samaj to the new Chatrapati Rajaram who ascended the Kolhapur throne after Shahu's death, says, "...The Satyashodhak Samaj has suffered greatly owing to the sudden and untimely demise of the highly venerated benefactor of his subjects Shriman Maharaja Shahu Chatrapati, the King of Karveer. He planted the sapling of the Satyashodhak Samaj in order to free the non-Brahmin society from the unjust domination of the Brahmins. But before it could grow into a tree he passed

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away.....as a result of the reforms he accomplished in the religious and social fields through the Satyashodhak Samaj he has received wide acclaim all over the Indian continent. Late Shri Shahu Maharaja has accomplished a mission no other king or an aristocrat either existing or among those existed previously could ever achieve and therefore the non-Brahmin subjects have with great respect and pleasure decorated him with the epithet of extreme honor namely the RAJARSHI..... We firmly believe that the spread of the Satyashodhak movement will lead the non-Brahmins to the attainment of religious, social and political freedom."[22] -(August 28, 1922). Later on, in 1927 in a commemorative inscription presented to Mahatma Gandhi the Samaj, reminiscing Shahu, had noted with gratitude that the Maharaja had encouraged the Satyashodhak Samaj in order to free the majority of the agriculturist people of their mental slavery.[23]

In 1927, Pandharinath Patil, Satyashodhak activist, wrote the first comprehensive biography of Mahatma Phule in Marathi. In the preface to this biography, a leader from Berar region, Narayanrao Amrutkar, writes, "Since Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja espoused the principles of Satyashodhak Samaj it spread like a rapid fire in Maharashtra and became strong enough to dig at the roots of the Brahmanism. Various new chronicles espousing Satyashodhak views began to crop up. Forceful orators began to preach moving around and the literate who would otherwise ridicule the principles of the Samaj began to be mesmerized by the truth inherent in its doctrine.[24] Achyutrao Kolhatkar, the editor of *Sandesh* and a Brahmin thinker, was an admirer of Shahu. As regards Shahu's contribution to the Satyashodhak movement he says, ".....If this movement were not to have a loving motherly support in the person of Rajarshi Shahu to pamper it, if it were not to acquire a brave diplomat in the person of Rajarshi Shahu who could easily knock out even the best in the trade, this movement would have either turned lame like the Prarthana Samaj or lonely like the moderate reformers in Maharashtra.[25]

One of Shahu's associates and a prominent Satyashodhak leader Bhaskarrao Jadhav, the editor of *Hunter* Khanderao Bagal etc. also appear to have given all credit for revival of Satyashodhak Samaj to Shahu alone. In Shahu's lifetime Jadhav had written, "All the credit for the success the activists of the Satyashodhak Samaj have achieved goes to the efforts of Shahu Maharaja."[26] Bagal writes, "Shahu Maharaja, with banners of Satyashodhak Samaj in one hand and of equality in the other disseminated the principles of Mahatma Phule all over Maharashtra."[27]

The above mentioned evidence about Shahu's work towards advancement of Satyashodhak movement has been advanced in order to make it clear why the leaders and activists of the Samaj contemporary to Shahu as well as the ones belonging to the next generation regarded the Maharaja as an ardent proponent of the movement; in other words regarded him as a true 'Satyashodhak'. This has a reference to a controversy over whether Shahu was an Arya Samajist or a Satyashodhak which had raged even during his lifetime.

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21.

SATYASHODHAK OR ARYA SAMAJIST ?

A great man's life is seldom free of controversy. Shahu Chhatrapati is not an exception. Even during his lifetime, some of Shahu's actions caused fierce controversies triggering acrimonious debates. Echoes of these debates could be heard amongst scholars of Shahu's biography. Whether he was an Arya Samajist or a Satyashodhak is one such major controversy.

SHAHU : 'THE PROPONENT OF ARYA SAMAJ'

A group of scholars such as S.M. Garge and Dr.Y.D. Phadke has propounded the view that Shahu in his deeds and thoughts was always an Arya Samajist and never a Satyashodhak; whereas he was a complete Satyashodhak; a true disciple of Mahatma Phule is what another group of scholars such as Dr. V.B. Kolte and Dr.Ramesh Jadhv has advocated. The scholars belonging to both the groups have tried to corroborate their views with a corpus of evidences and proofs. Taking into consideration the importance of documentary evidence in the field of historical research it does not require much labour to prove that Shahu was an Arya Samajist and not a Satyashodhak on any count. We have already discussed how he had advocated the cause of the Arya Samaj and publicly declared the affection he felt for that organization. Suffice here to state that Shahu himself in many of his public addresses and in personal correspondence has discussed 'how I turned an Arya Samajist or how by heart I am an Arya Samajist'.[1] However, more important than this are the unambiguous proofs available of his clear declarations that "I am not a Satyashodhak".

In a letter in 1920 to his friend from Baroda, Khaserao Jadhav, Shahu writes, "I have been making it explicitly clear in all my public addresses that I am against the Satyashodhak Samaj....I have seen some *Satyashodhak Jalsas* performances in the same way I have listened to the preaching of the Christians. However, I do not conform to their views at all. Just as I agree to some views of Christains and Muslims, I concur with some of the Satyashodhak opinions as well. But that does not amount to my being a Satyashodhak."[2] The very next year in a letter published in the journal *Jagruti* of Baroda, Shahu says, "I was never a Satya-Samajist and I am not...in Kolhapur there are many sects such as Arya Samaj, Theosophy etc. Satyasamaj is one of them. When I completely believe in the Vedas and I adhere to it strictly then why this assault

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against me?"[3] Statements to this effect are also found in many of Shahu's other letters as well. It is no wonder then if Dr. Phadke on the basis of such copious documentary evidence concludes that Shahu was not a Satyashodhak but an advocate of the Arya Samaj.[4]

Garge, the other scholar, too is of the view that Shahu espoused the principles and aims and objectives of the Arya Samaj. Regarding the Satyashodhak Samaj Garge says, "After going through the addresses delivered by Shahu Maharaja and his work in detail, the prima-facie inference drawn is that the social and religious outlook of Shahu Maharaja did not conform to the Satyashodhak outlook. Especially in the context of religious reforms, they appear to be rather opposed....Shahu was reasonably aware that Mahatma Phule accomplished a historical task by hammering at the heart of the Brahminical hegemony. However even after accepting all this, it cannot be concluded that he had accepted being a disciple of Mahatma Phule. Neither Maharaja appears to have denoted it nor do his policies seem to reveal anything of that sort. Nowhere is it stated that Maharaja specially encouraged the religious and social ideas of the Satyashodhak Samaj. Rather at times he pointed the lacunae in the religious thinking of the Satyashodhak Samaj."[5]

SHAHU : 'A COMPLETE SATYASHODHAK'

The other group of scholars can also produce many documentary evidences to conclude safely that Shahu was a Satyashodhak. We have already referred in detail to his efforts and assistance in founding the Samaj in Kolhapur and to its expanse all over Maharashtra. Besides a great deal of respect for the founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj, Phule and statements showing conformation with his principles are found in his speeches. In 1918, in his presidential address at the convention of the Arya Samaj he appears speaking words of honor for Phule. He had said, "As Phule was very thoughtful and probing he very well realized the Branminical ploy... he had understood that a lot of attempts were made to break down the Brahmin bureaucracy but until the religious domination of the Brahmins is done away by a direct attack they would be of no avail and the dependence of the non-Brahmins would continue. With this understanding, he began to strike at the heart of the Brahmin supremacy. The chief proposition of Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj is that there is no need of an agent between the God and his devotee. Therefore, he began to preach that each one should perform religious rites himself without the services of the Brahmin priests. Since the non-Brahmin society is in shackles controlled by Brahmins and buried in the resulting ignorance for over a thousand years, the Satyashodhaks face quite a few problems in their task. However a reformer has no way but to fight through troubles."[6]

In the same address referring to the procession the puritan Brahmins of Poona had organised to ridicule Swami Dayanand, Shahu said, "There Jotirao Phule and his followers had well realized that sweet words or reasoning won't work with Brahmin bureaucracy and began to preach against the Brahmins according to the dictum 'Tit for Tat'. If true religion and religious knowledge are to enter the land of the South, this land should be prepared for the task by the ones like the Satyashodhak Samaj. In this way, once the rocks and weeds in the land are weeded out the seed of the Aryan religion will sow deep, flourish and bring everyone happiness."[7]

In April 1920, Shahu addressed the

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foundation laying ceremony of a Maratha students' Boarding House at Nasik. In his address congratulating the management for keeping the hostel open for students of all castes he said, "The policy of this hostel is worth imitating. Even though it is set up out of the generosity of the Marathas occasioned by the Maratha Education Conference, the management has displayed a loftiness of mind and patriotism in keeping it open for all castes. They have publicly displayed their commitment to truth and strength of mind in bringing into practice the Satyashodhak principle that all men are the children of God and hence brothers. No admiration would be enough for this act. The more this cosmopolitan principle spreads among different institutions the better it would result. That would dilute the caste discriminations and help the cause of unity."[8] In this very address advocating the Satyashodhak principle that battered the priesthood Shahu says, "The nation cannot be redeemed unless the religious bureaucracy of the Brahmins is broken down. Therefore, the practice of getting religion imparted from the Brahmins clerics or other Brahmins should be given up."[9]

Shahu on August 20, 1920, wrote a letter to Adam, Adviser to the Governor of Bombay about the conspiratorial activities of Brahmins. In it, regarding the *Satyashodhak Jalsas* he says, "....On account of these *Jalsas* the Brahmin community has begun to hate me more than before. But Of course, I am not related directly to the Satyashodhak Jalsa performances. However, I wish that the views espoused in these shows should spread everywhere. Though the Brahmins find these shows obscene they propagate the same ideas through *Purans* or *Kirtans* under the name of religion everyday. If such obscene tales could be narrated in a *Kirtan* why should their narration in a *Jalsa* be objected? I accept that I have sympathy for the *Jalsa* performers. During the elections the *Jalsawalahas* assist the non-Brahmins whereas the *Kirtankars* help the Brahmins."[10] In this letter, Shahu has clearly stated his wish that the principles of these *Jalsas*, viz. the principles of the Satyashodhak Samaj, should spread everywhere.

Advancing more evidence, Dr. V.B. Kolte asserts, "If this and similar statements elsewhere are taken into account there remains no doubt that he was a complete Satyashodhak. His words that ' I was never (a participant) in the Satyashodhak Samaj and I have refused to be connected in any way with the Satyashodhak movement' or his statement that ' I do not wish to keep any relation with the Satyashodhak Samaj as the Satyashodhak Samaj is likely to intensify caste jealousies' were undoubtedly guided by political exigencies."[11]

Maintaining that quite a few statements among the scores made by Shahu regarding Satyashodhak Samaj should be regarded as only occasional and of superficial significance Dr.Kolte adds, "At the 'Arya Samaj Conference' at Bhavnagar he had said that though the organizations such as the Satyashodhak Samaj have achieved some reforms, they would not be able to accomplish anything more substantial because they operate on the principle, 'tit for tat'. These words too must be treated as occasional and superficial. Doesn't the statement of the Maharaja that if 'I am going to be hated and disdained by the Brahmins even after being affectionate to them I am left with no choice but to adopt the policy of tit for tat', echo the same principle?. In order to cut to size the Brahmins who deride the other people as Shudra when he says- 'Brahmins are born of a Shudra....the three classes except the Brahmins are in existence'- isn't he

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displaying the same Satyashodhak attitude of retaliation through his lethal blow? In short, the words and nature of Shahu clearly reveal that he had become a thorough Satyashodhak."[12]

The reason why he admired the Arya Samaj even with such tendencies has also been explained by Dr. Kolte; "....That later on he was inclined towards the Arya Samaj is true. He has said, 'The Arya Samaj is born to overthrow the tyrannical yoke of the castes who have assumed the role of religious preachers. It is most urgent to get rid if this artificial yoke and, therefore, I like Arya Samaj.' Satyashodhak Samaj also advocated the same things. It only means that the commitment of the Arya Samaj to the Vedas perhaps accorded better satisfaction to Maharaja who was deeply religious at heart. Nevertheless, the disposition his mind had assumed out of the many experiences right from the beginning of his reign was that of a Satyashodhak."[13]

Throwing more light on how Shahu Maharaja advocated the cause of Satyashodhak Samaj better and propelled forward its work Dr. Ramesh Jadhav maintains, " Shahu Chhatrapati seems to have taken on the mantle of the task that Mahatma Phule so devotedly pursued all his life as per the dictum, (For the) benefit of the masses! (For the) happiness of the masses!...if we look at the life and work of Shahu in detail, we have to accept that he successfully carried forward the tradition Phule had initiated. The direction of the Satyashodhak movement's work can also be gathered from the annual reports of the Satyashodhak Samaj available for the first three years. Rajarshi worked all his life in the same direction. Therefore, it has to be candidly accepted that Phule and Shahu were in perfect harmony and not at discord. If the deeds of the two are studied and analyzed more keenly it becomes clear that Shahu was indeed committed to the Satyashodhak doctrine."[14] Finally Dr. Jadhav concludes, "In short, the Satyashodhak movement of Phule spread rapidly all over Maharashtra because of the strong leadership of Shahu. For some time after the passing away of Mahatma Phule, this movement had become literally extinct. However, the leadership this movement acquired from Shahu proved to be its elixir! Shahu pumped life into the movement."[15]

WHY DID SHAHU OPENLY OPPOSE THE SATYASHODAKS?

Even if it were so, the discussion as to why did Shahu, even if occasionally, make statements like 'I was never a Satya Samajist' nor I am (even now)' or openly opposed the Satyashodhaks on more than one occasions, becomes inevitable. The secret, as to why the same Shahu out of whose motivation the *Satyashodhak Jalsa* troupes came into existence washed his hands off this troupes, lies in the circumstances that were created then. After 1920, the Satyashodhak movement gradually spread all over Maharashtra. The Satyashodhaks were strongly active especially in the districts of Satara, Solapur, Nagar etc. The *Satyashodhak Jalsas* would perform hard-hitting programs exposing the fraud of the Brahmin autocracy. It was having direct effect on the non-Brahmin society. Villages seethed with strong anti-Brahmin sentiments. At some places in the district of Satara, the Brahmins faced social boycott. Instances of ostracisation like refusal to till the Brahmin-owned lands, complete boycott on Brahmin priest in religious rituals; refusal of *Balutas*- village potters, barbers etc.- to work for Brahmins were reported. The Satyashodhak enthusiasts at many places took aggressive

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postures. At Parli, during *Dasnavami* festival, meals were arranged in separate rows for Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Having decided to break this humiliating discrimination, Satyashodhaks there began to demand for a common line up. The Brahmins refused to yield. As a result, a brawl ensued between the two parties and the Brahmins had to leave without having their meals. These events were flashed in newspapers with sensational headlines as 'atrocities of Satyashodhaks.' Committees named *Brahmin Sanrakshak Sabha* or ' Brahminism Protection Societies' to enquire into these atrocities were formed at various places. At some places, the two groups clashed physically and a plethora of criminal cases lodged, genuine or false! And wherever this happened, Brahmin newspapers pointed fingers at Shahu Chhatrapati and clamored for action.[16] They demanded the British Government should compel Shahu to fall in line. The Government too became restless with the unrest caused by Brahmin- non-Brahmin conflicts and had begun to send letters of enquiry to Shahu.[17]

Shahu could control organizations and movements within his principality but not those outside his jurisdiction. Under such circumstances, as a vassal he was not in a position to assume responsibility of the aggressive brawls Satyashodhaks initiated with the Brahmins. In the British territories, Brahmin-non-Brahmin confrontation created law and order problems at several places. Under such circumstance, Shahu's pronouncement of being a Satyashodhak would be tantamount to acceptance of moral responsibility for all the acts of Satyashodhak activists all over Maharashtra. But the fact was the whole of Maharashtra did regard him as the pillar of Satyashodhak movement. Trapped in this dilemma, Shahu was obliged to make public statements such as 'I was never a Satya Samajist nor I am.' These were his tactical statements made with 'good political sense' in the prevailing social and political context. It should also be remembered that Shahu had made similar statements whenever he was attacked holding him responsible for acts of the Satyashodhak activists. As such, if these are taken literally, they are quite likely to misguide the scholar.

SHAHU'S PREDILECTION FOR SATYASHODHAK

Shahu's associates in his social mission and the Satyashodhak spearheads namely Baburao Yadav, Shripatrao Shinde and Walchand Kothari in 1919 had undertaken a propaganda campaign in the regions of Belgaum, Dharwad and Hubli. In this campaign, Brahmins and non-Brahmins clashed at some public meetings they conducted. The political representative thence enquired whether Shahu had ordered the trio of these activists. Shahu replied, "I have not sent them on the tour nor do they require my orders to undertake such excursions. They are strong leaders with a sacrificial bend of mind and they have dedicated their life for betterment of the backward classes."[18]

In 1920, the members of Tilak party disrupted a public meeting of Shahu in Poona and themselves registered a complaint of inciting arson against him. Later on, Khaserao Jadhav tried to mediate between Shahu and Tilak party to settle the matter. The Tilak party put forth a cunning proposal. They showed readiness to withdraw the complaint if Shahu agreed to withdraw support to the Maratha League or Satyashodhak Samaj. Shahu in a letter to Montegomery, Secretary to the British Government, said that not extending such support would amount "to asking them to

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abandon their mission of redemption of the depressed classes and that I shall never do."[19] In a letter to Khaserao Jadhav, Shahu writes, "I would never part with the people and castes who are friendly to me. I would not act against my objective. I have had to suffer great deal on account of my outspokenness and I am ready to undergo the suffering. I would listen to you but do not force me to part with my ideals. I would not behave against my principles. I know these things have been planned to frighten me but I would never succumb."[20]

Shahu's true predilection towards the Satyashodhak Samaj can be gathered from these sentiments. In fact, barring his commitment to *Vedas* there was no difference in the task Shahu had chosen as mission of his life and the task of the original founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj. He had employed all his clout in various tasks such as breaking the monopoly the Brahmins in religious and social fields, eradication of caste discrimination, redemption of the untouchables, and dissemination of primary education among the ignorant masses. In a way, this was the same work as of the Satyashodhak Samaj and ,therefore, the followers of the Samaj regarded him as a Satyashodhak turning a Nelson's eye towards his loyalty to the Vedic scriptures. This consideration was not a result of misinterpretation of him by the followers of the Samaj but rather of the objective appreciation of his work. This means that Shahu, even while he proclaimed himself an Arya Samajist, in actuality performed the tasks of the Satyashodhak Samaj. However, he consciously avoided to label his work as that of Satyashodhak Samaj.

Shahu publicly called himself an Arya Samajist. However, it should be noted that all his associates near and dear to him - Jadhav, Latthe, Dongre, Shinde, Yadav, Bagal etc. - were all Satyashodhaks and not Arya Samajist. None of these became an Arya Samajist neither did Shahu try to increase Arya Samaj membership. Arya Samaj did not spread in Maharashtra the way it did in North India. This was because in Maharashtra, *Prarthana Samaj* had an active presence in the upper social strata where as the lower strata was associated with the Satyashodhak activity. As was the case with the *Prarthana Samaj*, the ambit of the work of the Arya Samaj was limited to the class of intellectuals. Shahu was clear in his mind that it was the Satyashodhak Samaj that was needed for redemption of the masses of Maharashtra and not the Arya Samaj.

Satyashodhak was a sprout that naturally cropped in the soil of this land. The original founder himself was born in a caste regarded as Shudra and the basic aim of this Samaj was to free the Shudras and *Ati-Shudras* from Brahminical domination. It was natural that the educated and the awakened elements from the Bahujan Samaj who wanted to help their people turned to the Satyashodhak Samaj rather than the Arya Samaj.

SHAHU'S SO-CALLED LOYALTY TO VEDAS

It does not appear that Shahu strictly adhered to the principles of the Arya Samaj of which he was a follower. Arya Samaj does not allow idol worship. Shahu continued to worship idols of many deities in the palace throughout his life.. He did not believe in sacrificial rituals that Arya Samaj practised. As such, the only issue that remains is that of his loyalty to the Vedas. Here, one of his reminiscences is worth narrating.

The non-Brahmin children would be

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trained in the Vedic rituals in the Vedic school founded by the Maharaja. Once, he came to the school and said to the Director there, "Tomorrow is the day of my father's *Shraddh.** I want your students to perform it for me." The Director was startled. Was there a dearth of expert priests in Vedic learning in Kolhapur? If desired even a learned cleric from the non-Brahmin society could be obtained. The Director was puzzled at Shahu's insistence on getting a student instead and said, "These children do not know much. Your Highness should go for a better experienced person." And what was Shahu's response? "These are my children. These are the children of the non-Brahmin masses. Doesn't matter even if they recite the alphabets. But I do not want a Brahmin priest," Shahu snapped.**

The story is eloquent enough. It would make any scholar think twice about Shahu's commitment to the Vedas and significance of Arya Samaj in his life. Shahu did insist on the 'right to Vedas' but that was not for revival of some obscure Vedic traditions. He only intended to break the Brahmin monopoly over Vedic learning to make a point. Dr.Ambedkar's *Satyagraha* to seek entry into Kala Ram temple at Nasik was not out of his religous devotion but to assert his right as a Hindu. Whether Ram was dark or fair was least important. The principle of social justice underlying the temple entry was the point.

SHAHU : DESCIPLE OF NONE

Shahu utilized the institutions of Arya Samaj, Satyashodhak Samaj, Theosophical Society, Christian Missions with a single minded objective of social liberation of the Bahujan Samaj. Just as the Mogul emperor Akbar befriended all religions and collected good elements from all to satiate his religious quest, Shahu in his obsession for amelioration of the ignorant masses, befriended all social organizations and utilized their constructive energies for his goals. However, Shahu never tried to found a new sect of his own as Akbar did.

One more issue needs to be cleared. A number of scholars have regarded Shahu as either a follower or disciple of Mahatma Phule. We are of the opinion that Shahu was a great man endowed with vision and creativity. And persons of his greatness are sovereign entities who cannot become a disciple of any one human being howsoever great the latter might be. They are born geniuses. Shivaji the Great was not a follower of any one. Mahatma Phule was not anybody's disciple. Great men like them are truely sovereign. What propels them on their chosen path is the inspiration of humanity innate within their hearts. They may draw support for their mission from men and organisations. A great soul treads a lonely path. Once historians understand Shahu's life in this context, many superficial and puzzling questions such as how does an Arya Samajist Shahu indulge in idol worship or how does a Satyashodhak Shahu establish a seat of Kshatrajagadguru become redundant.

◆

*A funeral ceremony observed at various fixed period, consisting of offerings with water and fire to the gods and of gifts and food to relations present and assisting Brahmins.

**One Mr. Dattatraya Kushappa Birade, a student of the Vedic school then and who later worked as a cleric in the temple of goddess Tulja Bhavani in Kolhapur, narrated this incident at the age of 90 to present author.

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22.

THE KSHATRAJAGADGURU

The years around 1920 in Shahu's life were exciting, full of actions, thoughts, deeds of reforms. During this period, many social measures were implemented and laws were made that dealt blow to the unjust customs and traditions. The creation of the seat of *Kshatrajagadguru* was one such measure. This measure not only shocked the adherents of racial superiority but also perplexed the hardcore reformists such as the Satyashodhaks. This act of Shahu created a raging storm in contemporary Maharashtra and later became the main cause of difference of opinion between the scholars and students of the Shahu's life.

BACKGROUND

Creation of the seat of Kshatrajagadguru was not a result of a whim on the part of Shahu. Its roots lay in the struggle with the Brahmin priesthood during the *Vedokta* conflict. Having suffered at the hands of a supercilious priesthood on this issue, Shahu had promised himself to free his caste from its clutches. In a letter to a friend in February, 1904 he says, "I feel we too should have priests of our caste just the way *Daivadnya Sonars** have. The *Shenvi*** community too has made such arrangement and is doing well without the aid of the Brahmins. However, there are some among us who are of the opinion that we should persuade the Brahmins to perform our religious rituals and thereby avert permanent estrangement. There are also certain examples such as the Jains and *Lingayats* who have cast away the yoke of the Brahmins just as the *Sonars* and *Shenavis* and reached a state of prosperity"[1]

Over the period that followed, a plenty of water had flown down the *Panchganga*. A lot of good and bad experiences with Jagadguru Shankaracharya of the Karveer seat had deepened Shahu's understanding of the rapacious scourge of caste. Meanwhile in 1917 he had ensconced Dr. Kurtkoti as the Shankaracharya of the Karveer seat. Dr Kurtkoti was a great scholar. Shahu was impressed by his reformist thoughts and progressive views favouring harmony between western and eastern cultures. After ascension to the seat, he advocated many reforms in his speeches and publicly condemned untouchability.

*The caste of goldsmiths.

**A highly literate cast like Prabhus.

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However, within one year he began to show his true colours and exposed himself as a hardline orthodox. Since this directly conflicted with the Chhatrapati's fundamental objective behind establishing the holy mutt, the episode ended with Kurtkoti's resignation-(October, 1918). A disillusioned Shahu told him, "I got carried away and deceived by your talk of moral values, moral standards, social justice and so on."[2] After Kurtkoti, Atmaramshastri Chitre was reckoned as the Shankaracharya of Karveer.[3] True that the seat did not remain empty but Shahu lost hopes of getting justice for non-Brahmin masses from the chief of this seat.

He had already determined to overthrow the yoke of the Brahmin priests once and for all by getting the religious rites of the people performed by the priests of their own castes. It was on this backdrop that he started in Kolhapur in July 1920 the Shri Shivaji Vedic School to train Maratha clergy.

By this time, Shahu had come to a decision of creating an independent Jagadguru for his caste. In a letter written to the Prince of Indore around this time he says, "I have come to understand that you wish a performance of all the religious rites befitting a Kshatriya by *Veodkta* method. You know well what actions we have taken here. To pursue our aims and objectives we have started here an institution named *Shivaji Kshatriya Samaj*. We have arranged the performances of all our religious acts under the auspices of the Marathas. To impart a permanent character to our institution we wish to make use of the seat of the famous Mauni Maharaj at Patgaon. Maunibaba was a Kshatriya saint and is considered venerable by all the Marathas. Truly, he was a Jagadguru and he performed rites of religious worship by *Vedokta* method. We would resurrect a Maratha on this seat and he would become the Jagadguru of the Marathas... it is our duty to see whether the religious rites of the Marathas in our states are performed in the Vedic method or otherwise. It is our duty to get rid of the hurdles that obstruct Marathas in religious matters. It is necessary to have capable Marathas in our service who are equal to Brahmin priests. This way we have decided to throw off the yoke of Brahmins and free ourselves of the religious influence of that cunning caste."[4]

From this it becomes clear that the creation of the office of *Kshatrajagadguru* was the culmination of Shahu's conflict with Brahmins whose racial superiority complex and hegemonistic attitude was starkly exposed during the *Vedokta* episode. This conflict would not end with merrily winning the Vedic rights equivalent to the Brahmins alone. The objective of the Vedokta conflict would reach its logical end only after destroying their religious influence by overthrowing the Brahminical religious yoke. It appears from the contemporary documents that Shahu had publicly declared his idea of formation of the *Kshatrajagadguru* office to get an idea of public opinion. The non-Brahmin elites had begun to discuss pros and cons of the proposal. Many eminent Maratha persons supported the idea and sent letters of approval to Shahu. Maharshi Shinde, however, felt otherwise. He said, "History shows traditionally, from Shahu I, in case of a disagreement on religious affairs, the verdict of the coroneted king is regarded final. Therefore, Chhatrapati Shahu should himself exercise his authority instead of appointing anyone else as Jagadguru."[5] Though this opinion was sound in principle, in practice, the Chhatrapati, exercising his authority in religious matters,

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would have proved troublesome and problematic. In addition, such arrangement would not fall in line with the concept of *Kshatrajagadguru.*

KSHATRA JAGADGURU CREATED

Shahu published a historic declaration regarding creation of the office of Kshatrajagadguru on October 12, 1920. In it he clearly explained his ideological stance and the reason behind the formation of this seat in details. The declaration says, "It is quite evident that now a days two factions namely Brahmins and non-Brahmins have been formed within the Hindu society and the unwarranted discrepancies between them have reached its apogee. These circumstances do not augur well for national interests. That Brahmins consider non-Brahmins with condescension in social and religious affairs is obvious. The religion of the Hindu people is Vedic and all encompassing which the contemporary fraudulent Brahminical religion has shrunk and condensed the classical Vedic ideology to Puranic form mixing it with the concept of *Purush.** As such, people have become oblivious of the true and noble Vedic religion. This is a great tragedy. These circumstances have left no means to render possible a culture anticipated in the Vedic tradition thereby making the understanding of the true form of the Vedic religion an impossibility. Non-Brahmins maintain that the Brahmin class and the so-called Jagadguru of theirs do not reflect on the original Vedic religion and there is no chance that they would bring about the religious enrichment of the other people. His Highness has received scores of letters to this effect. Taking into consideration all such applications and other pros and cons His Highness has decided that the intent of the Maratha and non-Brahmins is commendable and is appreciated by His Highness. As we are residents of the same nation, it is jeopardizing the national interests to fight with the Brahmins intermittently over religious matters. It is our duty to give up such petty conflicts and exert for betterment of society.

"In the State of Karveer the true Jagadguru seat of the Marathas is quite ancient. However, until now we the Kshatriya Marathas had forgotten this fact. This seat is that of the Mauni Maharaj of Patgaon. It has been historically acclaimed that this very Mauni Maharaj had blessed with preaching, Shri Shivchhatrapati Maharaja. In times of trouble, Shri Shivchhatrapati would go to Mauni Maharaj and take his blessings. And thus he never failed in any of his undertakings. The installation of Ramdas or Dadaji Konddev as teachers of Shri Shivaji Maharaja is again a machination of the Brahmins. There is no concrete historical evidence to corroborate such thing. However, as against this, loads of evidence is available at Kolhapur and Satara about Patgaon seat. As Kolhapur was established as an independent branch after Shivaji the Great, the Maharaja of Kolhapur also revered him (Mauni Maharaj) as a Jagadguru and granted villages as *inam* to the Patgaon Gadi or seat for its well being and progress. This proves beyond doubt that this establishment was extremely reverent for the King of Kolhapur. This seat belongs exclusively to the Maratha Kshatriyas and has sustained with succession of the *Shishyas* (disciples) of the Guru as per the tradition. His Highnes desires to place on such sanctimonious seat a saintly man from the Maratha community and raise it to eminence

*As described in *Purush Sookt*, one of the well-known Hindu scriptures.

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as a seat of our Jagadguru in order that it helps appropriately the Kshatriya Marathas in religious affairs. At present, this holy *Gadi* is under the aegis of the government for want of a disciple. All its income is being retransferred to it as before and following rules are laid down to ensure its continuous prosperity.

1. There shall be a Dharmadhikari (religious officer) and a Panchayat Court (court of arbitrators) to arbitrate in religious matters

2. There shall be a school to impart education in Vedic religion

3. His Highness awards this seat the right to two *Morchals** and *Suryapaan***

4. To this *Gadi* is appointed the resident of Benadi Sadashivrao Laxamanrao Patil, born in the clan of the Kshatriyas.....this Jagadguru is forbidden from treating humans as beasts of burden and travelling in a palanquin on their shoulders. For his transport he shall use four horses and other animals meant for the adornment of the monastery."[6]

Shahu published one more order of the same date in the gazette of Kolhapur. Accordingly, the mandatory traditional compulsion on a person ascending the seat of a Kshatrajagadguru to remain unmarried was annulled. In this order had said that, according to this tradition if a Jagadguru wants to marry he shall not be obliged otherwise.[7] He thought it impractical and unjust to compel Sadashivrao Patil who was in the prime of his youth to remain unmarried all his life.

CONSECERATION OF KSHATRAJAGADGURU

Sadashivrao Laxaman Patil was an intelligent student of Sanskrit and Philosophy of the Fergusson College. Shahu had read some of his articles published in newspapers. It had made him confident that Sadashivrao with his yearning for social good would be an appropriate selection for the office of Kshatrajagadguru. On November 11, 1920, Sadashivrao was methodically consecrated in the monastery of Maunibaba at Patgaon and ascended to the seat of Kshatrajagdguru amidst the recitation of Vedic mantras. In the special Darbar summoned on this occasion, Shahu Maharaja himself bowed in salutation to the new Kshatrajagadguru and paid his respects. All his courtiers except Bhaskarrao Jadhav followed. Jadhav did not oblige even after Shahu asked him to pay respects. A die-hard Satyashodhak that he was, he considered even the office of Kshatrajagadguru as an intermediary between man and the god. For the sake of his principles, he had put his career in the Court at stake. Shahu, angry at his disobedience, asked him to leave the Darbar. Jadhav did follow this order. The Darbar closed. People expected Jadhav to be punished severely. However, what followed startled everyone. Shahu sent a horse cart to fetch Jadhav to the palace and extolled his commitment to his principles, "Jadhavrao, well done! You showed such commitment to the true values of Mahatma Phule in a full Darbar. I was very happy. I am proud that my State is host to a frank and principled man like you"[8]

Shahu expected his Kshatrajagadguru to be different from the Brahmin *Jagadguru* in the monastery of Sahankaracharya. His *Jagadguru* would remain aloof from the evil practices of receiving wealth from devotees in the form of alms or donations, getting his feet washed; move in the palanquin carried on the shoulders by devotees. A letter written to his *Jagadguru* by Shahu at

* An ornamental bunch or broom of peacock feathers to be waved over idols, kings, holy men etc.

** Ornamental flat umbrella.

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the beginning of 1921 is available. Therein, he writes, ".....You should begin your work soon. You should keep studying philosophy. You should not aim to be an agent of God. Also your aim should not be like other Swamis. You should aim to serve the country and serve the people. You should start a Vedic school and send over its prospects." [9] This letter, short, but thick with content speaks volumes about Shahu's hopes and expectations from the Kshatrajagadguru. Shahu himself did not think of the Kshatrajagadguru as an agent between man and god. Moreover, it also makes clear that Shahu expected him to ensure that such agents do not proliferate in the society.

REPURCUSSIONS

The reverberations of Shahu's seemingly momentous action of creating a new holy *peeth* of Kshatrajagadguru were heard far and wide, particularly among his associates in the social reform movements and also among his opponents. The non-Brahmin intellectuals such as Jadhav, Maharshi Shinde, Prabodhankar Thackeray who championed the principles of the Satyashodhak Samaj expressed their displeasure in stringent words. Jadhav had publicly demonstrated his vehement opposition in the presence of Shahu in a full Darbar declaring that "as an honest Satyashodhak and a loyal disciple of Mahatma Jotirao Phule I refuse to recognize institutions such as Jagadguru and his seat."[10]

Thackeray delivered a forceful blow in an article 'Revolt against mental servitude'. Maintaining that creation of Kshatrajagadguru was a symbol of mental slavery, he said, "creation of the seat of a Kashatrajagadguru in order to escape the servitude of the Brahmin Jagadguru amounts to accepting a new order of slavery to get rid of the old one. The concept that a monastery of Shankaracharya is but essential with a monastic head on it for social or religious development is in itself indicative of slavish mentality. Slavery cannot be eradicated with slavery. Besides, in order to destroy the autocratic order of mendicants that fostered mental slavery under the aegis of *Varnashram* espousing Jagadguru, the creation of another seat of a Kshatrajagadguru on similar principles is ridiculous. This is like an an ox strongly convinced that God has given him the neck only to carry the yoke shackles; The ox then willingly switches one yoke for the other which he considers sweeter and comfotable than the previous one. With monasteries come monastic heads; with monastic head starts a sect. A sect is readily followed by sectarian slavery."[11]

This, in no way means that all the Satyashodhak leaders and activist opposed the concept of Kshatrajagadguru. The deliberations of the staunch Satyashodhak leader and editor of *Dinamitra*, Mukundrao Patil, are worth noting. In a presidential address delivered at a Satyashodhak conference in Karad he says, "It is not that the Satyashodhaks do not want a religious head or religious teacher. The sole contention of the Samaj is that the religion should not be deemed restricted by any symbol. The Samaj ostracises only such teachers who benefit by creating a wall of ignorance between the God and the devotee. Though the Jains, Lingayats, Parsis and Muslims have independent religious leaders they are beneficial to the society."[12] If the views of the editor of *Dinamitra* are accorded validity, Shahu's act of appointing a religious head of his caste cannot be said to fall outside the Satyashodhak doctrine.

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The other Satyashodhak leader and biographer of Shahu, Annasaheb Latthe, while comparing Shahu's work of religious reforms with the work of protestant reformers says, "....The reformers like Luther, irked by the delinquencies of the Roman Catholic religious heads and primed to crush the revolt of Pope never advocated the obliteration of the institution of religion. Rather they devised new religious institutions that were flawless and reformed on the same lines as the old ones. Shahu's objective in founding the Kshatrajagadguru and Shivaji Vedic School was the same as these protestant reformers."[13]

One more fervent Sathyashodhak, the editor of Rashtraveer, Shamrao Desai justifies Shahu's act comparing it with the work of Kemal Pasha of Turkestan and says, " Rajarshi severed relations with the seats of religious teachers and priestly proclivities who, afflicted with Brahmanism, had not only cankerwormed the self respect of the non-Brahmins but also of humanity. His act resembled the way Mustafa Kemal Pasha razed down the Khilafat when it began to obstruct the progress of the independent state. Some might object that though he shoved off Brahmin Jagadguru and Brahmin priests, didn't he replace them with religious teachers and clergy of his own caste? However, this is not an appropriate question. If Rajarshi were to be a dictator of India just as Mustafa Kemal Pasha of Turkey was, he might perhaps have razed down all the seats of religious heads with a plough drawn by donkeys. However, he did not command such colossal power. Therefore, what he did was to overthrow and demolish the prestige of traditional and unrestrained seat of a religious power and created another, people-friendly religious controlled by the people themselves. And even if it is questionable how relevant these new institutions would be in future, nevertheless, it is a matter of no small courage to found a new holy seat to contend with the time honored religious seat of the first Shankaracharya."[14]

More recently, two intellectuals from Maharashtra namely V.D.Ghate and Prof. N.R.Phatak have compared the religious rebellion of Shahu to the rebellion of Henry VIII of England against the authority of the Pope of Rome. Prof. Phathak says, "Henry wiped off from England the influence of the Pope who made many a European king dance to his tune and arrogated all authority to himself. Shahu wiped off the aura of the Hindu Jagadguru and placed a Kshatrajagadguru in his seat."[15]

A NOVEL EXPERIMENT

Thackeray's attack on Shahu was a serious objection to the former's act of installing a *Jagadguru* of his own caste, which according to Thackeray had created a new social divide between Marathas and non-Marathas in addition to the Brahmin-non-Brahmin conflict.[17] Dhananjaya Keer, renowned biographer of Shahu, is in agreement with Thackeray and says, "The founding of the seat of Kshatrajagadguru by Shahu Maharaja who did not believe in caste discriminations took the progressive social movement a step backward and for a while the ideological focus of this movement wavered."[18]

There is nothing strange in the fact that the then non-Brahmin reformists and the later biographers of Shahu found Shahu's act puzzling or contradictory to his declared objectives and policies. For hadn't Shahu himself declared a war against class and caste distinctions?. Nevertheless, it

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cannot be maintained that Shahu had not given a thought to the significance of his act or its repercussions on the task he had undertaken. He was an experimenting societal endeavourer in the same way as he was an astute politician. The creation of the Kshatrajagadguru was a novel experiment in the field of social enterprise. Though he had won the rights of *vedokta* for the Marathas equivalent to Brahmins, the religious dominance of the Brahmin Jagadguru Shankaracharya over the Marathas had not come to an end. Even then, the Marathas had to be beholden to the Brahmin Jagadgurus as the head of the Vedic or Hindu religion. They had lost the aura but their authority still prevailed.. In Dr. Kurtkoti affair, Shahu had burnt his fingers. Now he had decided to become completely independent of the religious bureaucracy of Brahmins by severing permanently the relations with not only the Brahmin priesthood but also the Brahmin Jagadgurus. If the making of Maratha priests to replace the Brahmin priests were the first step in the struggle for religious freedom of the Marathas then the installation of a Maratha Jagadguru instead of a Brahmin Jagadguru was the second effective step in this struggle. In this long march, a non-Brahmin Jagadguru for the whole of the non-Brahmin society would be the third step. This could be a far more radical step mollifying his critics and leaving no opportunity to the likes of Thackeray to remonstrate. Though we do not have a concrete evidence , it cannot be said with any certainty either, especially looking at his aims and policies, that such a step was not in Shahu's scheme of things.

AN ACT AGAINST PHULE'S PRINCIPLES ?

Finally, one more issue needs to be cleared. Many intellectuals in Maharashtra have objected to both momentous decisions - formation of the Maratha priesthood and establishing a Maratha Jagadguru- on the ground that these were contrary to the principles of Mahatma Jotiba Phule. Writer and thikner Prabhakar Vaidya says, "In only one matter did Shahu act contradictory to Phule's principles and that too perhaps unconsciously! Phule shoved off agents and priests totally from the marital rites and initiated the revolutionary practice whereby the bride and the groom themselves solemnized the marriage in Marathi in presence of well-wishers and friends. To propagate such public marriages he personally took initiative and campaigned continuously in villages. He solemnized hundreds of marriages. When the traditionalists took legal objections, he tenaciously countered them. Shahu, however, in his fervor to establish his own *Vedokta* rights overlooked the marriage rite reforms that were so dear to Phule. In addition, Shahu ran a campaign in villages for performing marriages conventionally observing all *Vedokta* and textual details. The only difference was that instead of Brahmin priests he employed non-Brahmin ones who in essence were no different than Brahmin Bhatjis. In gist, it was a topsy-turvy affair where all traditional rites (devised by Brahmins) were performed, the necessary and sufficient condition being their performance should be under the auspices of a non-Brahmin priest. Though it was a reform in the particular context of those times there is no doubt it was in contradiction to the teachings of Mahatma Phule."[19]

One more scholar in this field Nalini Pandit concurs. She maintains, "The religious motivation of Phule was based on comprehensive moral values. He yearned

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to rid the muddle of worship, recitations, rites, rituals and channelise the innate impulses of a person. Though the non-Brahmin movement received much renown on account of encouragement by Shahu, it did not fulfil Phule's objective of liberating the non-Brahmin masses from the clutches of orthodoxy. The installation of the Kshatrajagadguru perpetuated the significance of the institution of monastery. The insistence on Vedic mantras resurrected the old ritualistic procedures and since the religious ignorance of the non-Brahmin society remained intact the priest persisted though the Brahmin disappeared."[20] Here, these scholars have taken for granted the commitment of Shahu to the principles of Mahatma Phule. The point to note is that Shahu had acknowledged no such commitment. He had charted his own course on this path, he was free to perform many experiments. This one was one of many such experiments.

Again, the evidence showing that these two decisions of Shahu were in fact not in much contravention to the views of Phule is available in contemporary source material even if for a moment we deem such commitment to exist and consider him a campaigner of the Satyashodhak doctrine.In the 19th century there lived in Mumbai a social activist of great ardor named Madhavrao Raghogi Rokde-(1839-1896). His friend, the famous historian Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar, has written Rokde's biography. Keluskar narrates an incident about Phule. He writes, "A lecture of the original founder of Satyashodhak Samaj Jotirao Phule was arranged in Bombay. Rao Bahadur Lokhande was in the chair. This writer (Keluskar) was present. Phule expressed his views cogently and briefly and invited questions from the audience. There Madhavrao expressed his concurrence towards the doctrine in general but did not like Phule's proposition that our priests should replace the Brahmin priests. Madhavrao said that it would be equivalent to creating a new caste of these priests and there is a risk of these new priests becoming equally headstrong and monopolistic as Brahmins. Besides, it would be appropriate if people know clearly about all other means for 'satyashodhan' - seeking the truth. Until this is made clear and understood and accepted by the people, it will be difficult to spread the Satyashodhak objectives and ideals.. The pursuance of a campaign to reject Brahmin priests would result in the unnecessary hatred of all Brahmin caste .In these words Madhavrao explicitly put forth his opinion...."[21]

Here Phule's explicit proposition is stated that instead of depending on the Brahmin priests our own priests viz. the caste priests belonging to 'our' own various castes must be created. Phule, who believed humanity as the only religion and had no faith in religious rituals, was surrounded by ignorant *Shudra* and *Atishudra* communities that did strongly believe in religion and religious rituals. Asking them to forfeit these beliefs forthwith would not do. Certain rituals such as marriage, *Vastushanti* (ritual purifiction of a new house), *Dashpinda* (paying obeissance to departed souls)were felt essential for the society and the Satyashodhak Samaj had to provide for their performance. For this purpose, Phule in 1887 had published a booklet titled 'all worship rites including the *mangalashtakas* (wedding hymns) as propounded by the Satyashodhak Samaj' in public interest. It contains the method of performance of the aforesaid rituals and mantras of worship

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according to the Satyashodhak principles. The *mangalashtakas* are to be addressed by the bride and the groom to each other. How would the ignorant and illiterate *shudra-atishudra* masses read the rituals or perform the procedure prescribed by Phule? The booklet clearly stated, "....Not even the shadow of the cunning Aryabhat Brahmin, who looks at the (low) castes of the wedding couple with contempt and considers everyone as his serf and servant, should be allowed on this occasion."[22] The only option is that educated persons from the depressed classes should take the initiative and get the rituals done in the Satyashodhak way. Phule has suggested separate priests for respective castes for this purpose. This priest would not be an intermediary between man and God like the Brahmin cleric. He would not be an agent like the Brahmin preceptor who exploits the ignorant masses religiously and economically, but a well-wisher who would help and guide them. Looked from this angle, the inference would be that the Maratha priests and Jagadguru installed by Shahu were in consonance with Phule's Satyashodhak ideology.

Another issue of contention remains. It is that Phule, for the performance of various rites or worships, composed his own rules or mantras according to the Satyashodhak principles; he did not accept the Vedic hymns. However, Shahu's priests are seen to adopt Vedic mantras and perform religious rites by Vedic method. It should be noted that contemporary Satyashodhak activists had supported this undertaking. It was a practical compromise of a sort. This is how the methods of Shahu and Phule differ; an ideological difference, its roots laying in Phule's hatred for the Vedas and Shahu's advocacy of the Vedas. On this backdrop, if Shahu were considered as an independent entity instead of a follower of Phule, it would be possible to probe many contemporary events more objectively.

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23.

NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

The non-Brahmin movement emerged on the historical scene of Maharashtra around 1917 and Shahu is looked upon as its pioneer. Though in its initial manifestation, the movement demanded political rights of non-Brahmins, its seeds lay in the Satyashodhak movement and the *Vedokta* movement of Shahu. The Satyashodhak movement fighting the totalitarian tyrannical authority of the Brahmin autocracy and begun by Phule was the first movement of the non-Brahmins in Maharashtra. The *Vedokta* movement started by Shahu was the next. Shahu by resurrecting Satyashodhak movement and simultaneously launching his *Vedokta* movement prepared the background for the non-Brahmin movement that emerged in 1917. In other words a stream of a separate movement in Maharashtra struggling for political rights of non-Brahmins joined with the confluence of the Satyashodhak and Vedokta movements of earlier period. The three together grew into what was later called the non-Brahmin movement. The credit of converting the two movements namely 'Satyashodhak' and 'Vedokta' into a political non-Brahmin movement goes to Shahu..

EMERGENCE OF CENTRES OF NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

Shahu's biographer Prof. Annasaheb Latthe, a fervent Satyashodhak himself, describes how the non-Brahmin movement had the background of the two aforesaid movements. He writes, "After the final triumph of Shahu in the Vedokta conflict, the Maratha clans all over Maharashtra cast off their seeming indifference towards the issue and was galvanized with unprecedented energy. Students of Maratha and non-Brahmin hostels and the people of the State, now matured with education and wide awake for their rights in Kolhapur's radical ambience, were triggered with electric enthusiasm into action. Wherever they went outside the State, they carried the torch of the new non-Brahmin awareness creating new centers of the movement. It would not be out of place to say that out of these centers emerged mainstream non-Brahmin movement of Maharashtra.."[1]

Shahu's work had inspired many centers of non-Brahmin awakening to crop up all over Maharashtra. These centers set up educational institutions and hostels for non-

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Brahmin communities. Along with these educational activities, many Satyashodhak schemes of social awakening were undertaken. A generation of activists was shaped out of these undertakings. The non-Brahmin groups of Nasik are a good example. There, young social (Satyashodhak) activists like D.R. Bhonsle, Ganpatrao More, Raosaheb Throat, Patil etc. set up Udajirao Pawar Maratha Boarding House and continued to emulate the work of Shahu. Similar non-Brahmin centers also sprang up in Maharashtra in Ahmednagar, Khandesh, Berar with encouragement from Shahu. The activists in these centers would call themselves Satyashodhaks. Shahu brought all these Satyashodhaks into the mainstream non-Brahmin movement.

In Phule's times, a majority of the Satyashodhak activists belonged to the lower castes. In the resurrected movement, mostly by Shahu's inspiration, the activists came from various castes and religions such as the aristocratic Marathas, the Bahujan Samaj Marathas, Jains, Lingayats, Kayastha Prabhus etc. Naturally, these people entered the non-Brahmin movement as part of the stream of the Satyashodhak movement. Here the point raised by Dr. Y. D. Phadke that 'though all Satyashodhaks joined the non-Brahmin movement, all those had entered the non-Brahmin movement were not Satyashodhaks', needs to be borne in mind.[2] During that period, though some Satyashodhaks considered all the constituents of the non-Brahmin movement as adherents of Satyashodhak ideology, many participants in the movement did not approve of such consideration. According to them, the Satyashodhak movement was a movement of religious reform whereas the non-Brahmin movement was a movement meant to achieve political rights.[3] Though there was substance in what they maintained, the social leaning of the non-Brahmin movement resembled the Satyashodhak movement owing to its major leaders such as Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Annasaheb Latthe, Mukundrao Patil etc. who were originally Satyashodhaks.

During the period of the rise of the non-Brahmin movement in the Bombay Presidency, a non-Brahmin movement of a similar type was coming to the fore in the Madras Presidency from about 1915. The non-Brahmins such as Dr. Madhvan Nair, Sir P. Tyagraj Chettiar, C. Natesh Mudaliar, Ramswami Mudaliar, The Raja of Pangal etc. were spearheading this movement. In order to obtain for the non-Brahmins their just rights and status by putting an end to the supremacy of the Brahmins in cultural, social, administrative and political fields they had founded an organization namely 'South Indian Peoples' Association' in 1916. They had launched a newspaper titled *Justice* for propagation of their views. After the announcement of Montagu, these leaders launched South Indian Liberal Federation, a political party aimed to claim their political rights. The party acquired the name *'Justice Party'* from its popular mouthpiece. In a very short time, *Justice* had created a challenge before *The Hindu*, the powerful Brahminical newspaper of the South.[4]

Not only the aims and objectives of the non-Brahmin movements in the presidencies of Bombay and Madras were almost similar, they had risen on the background of similar political circumstances. The First World War had begun in 1914. Indian National Congress, the main political party in India, was under

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the influence of the Moderates. The Radicals were kept outside the Congress camp. However, that very year Lokmanya Tilak was released and had received warm welcome all over India. One respectable leader of the Congress Dr. Annie Bezant was trying to bring about a compromise between the Radical and Moderate factions of the party. In the meantime in 1915 the two pioneers of the Moderates, G.K Gokhale and Sir Pherojshah Mehata, had left this world. It facilitated the entry of Radicals led by Tilak in Congress. That very year the Radicals were admitted into the Congress Party by modifying its constitution

And the very next year the Radical domination of Congress became very clear at the Lucknow session-(1916). Tilak became the leader of Congress and out of his efforts a pact was signed between the Congress and the Muslim League to fight the imperialist British Government and both in alliance voiced the demands for political reforms. Meanwhile the ongoing World War fought on the European soil was being described as a war between democracy and dictatorship by the Allied Powers such as England and France. Also the Allied Powers unleashed their propaganda that they were fighting the war to champion freedom and democracy throughout the world On this background, the Home Rule movements that Tilak and Dr. Annie Bezant had launched in Bombay and Madras Presidencies respectively even before the Lucknow session, had begun to assume an all India character. In 1917, Tilak and Dr. Bezant were at the height of popularity. The Home Rule movement had created unrest against the British rulers all over the country. On the one hand, the Government was trying to suppress this unrest while on the other it talked of political reforms to take the heat out of this movement. In these circumstances, Mr. E.S.Montegu, Secretary of State to India, made the historical declaration on political reforms in India. In a way, this was a direct impact of the Home Rule movement. Montagu had promised in his declaration the realization of a responsible self-government in India as an integral part of the British Empire; the devolution of Swarajya within the British Empire was to be granted step by step and the process was to begin shortly.

This was a very important step on the way towards India's freedom and it would make fundamental and long-lasting impact on the politics of India. The sphere of Indian social enterprise would also be affected. Social movements and politics are interdependent fields and mutually influence each other. A person influential in politics can also influence the society. The one who has to undertake social endeavour cannot afford to ignore politics. It was in keeping with this ambience that the non-Brahmin movements arose in the South about this time.

It was obvious that as the main political party the Congress would benefit Montagu's plan. And the Congress, after all, was the sum total of its leaders and activists, an overwhelming majority of whom were Brahmin. In other words, during that period Congress was considered as an organization that spearheaded the movement of political independence under the influence of Brahmins. In essence, it meant that the impending political reforms would accrue to the Brahmin class and the Brahmin autocracy would become more powerful on the strength of these rights. The non-

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Brahmins feared that the Brahmin autocracy stronger than ever before would become the biggest obstacle in the path of the non-Brahmins. They also sensed the danger of the non-Brahmin society remaining deprived of the impending reforms on account of its educational ignorance and economic destitution even though it was in majority. If it was to be saved from these dangers, the option was to awaken and prepare it to struggle for political rights. The non-Brahmin movements leaped to the fore and appeared on the surface of societal enterprise in 1917 in the South because of these political equations.

SHAHU'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE RISE OF NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

As a matter of fact, the non-Brahmin leaders of Maharashtra had sensed the changing winds of politics in India even before the formal appearance of the non-Brahmin movement. Leaders such as Prof. Latthe, Mukundrao Patil, Walchand Kothari, C.K.Bole etc. had founded the organization 'Deccan Rayat Association' in 1916 , a year before the non-Brahmin movement appeared on the scene . Its declared aim was 'to endeavour to protect the rights and interests of the backward communities and thereby promote national interests while remaining loyal to the British throne.'[5] This organization also started a newspaper, the *Deccan Rayat*. Shortly after, Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Shripatrao Shinde and others started another political organization called 'All India Maratha League.' In the meantime as an aftermath of the Montagu declaration, a movement of mass awakening had begun in order to forestall the likely Brahmin dominance in the impending legislatures of India and acquire representation to non-Brahmin communities in proportion to their population. From this arose the demand of separate representation to non-Brahmin castes such as Maratha, Jain, Lingayat and so on.

Tialk's, nationalist line was insistent that all political organizations and people of all castes and religions should come together without falling prey to the cunning British policy of 'divide and rule' to make an unanimous demand for Swarjya, a commendable policy indeed. Accordingly Tilak had brought together on single platform the two major organizations - the Congress, and the Muslim League. In Maharashtra, initially he took a positive position that if the non-Brahmins demanded separate electorates to protect their interests, the Brahmins as a class 'would happily keep silent' in consent so that the non-Brahmins were not left outside of the national mainstream. Unfortunately, he changed his stance within two months and began to attack the non-Brahmins' demand of communal representation in the Legislative Council. His attacks became so caustic as to ridicule the demand by contemptuously asking whether a *wani* (a trader by caste)was supposed to weigh grocery or a *Kumbhar* (potter by caste)to mould pottery in the Legislative Councils.[6] The non-Brahmin leaders in Maharashtra naturally were enraged; the bitter Brahmin-non-Brahmin dispute thus was further sharpened. The historic opportunity of a compromise between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin societies for the second time was lost; the first such opportunity had presented itself during the *Vedokta* conflict and was similarly lost.

As a vassal ruler under the tutelage of the British Empire, Shahu was under

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restrictions and could not openly participate in the politics of British India. However, the inner urge to strive for the betterment of the non-Brahmin communities would not allow him to remain quiet. Sometimes from behind the curtains and at times attending the meetings and conferences he kept in control the strings of the non-Brahmin movement and directed its course consistently for about four years until the end of his reign. Propounding that there was nothing wrong in a vassal like him participating in the political movements of the British territories he had said, "Though I am a king to my subjects, I am a subject of the British Empire and in this aspect my rights and responsibilities are similar to those of the people under the British rule. Therefore, I am of the view that a king should participate in the politics of the British India."[7] However many British officers such as Woodhouse and Fraser did not agree with this view. Initially, the Bombay Government was silent on this aspect. However, after the opposition party fuelled riots in Shahu's public meeting in Poona in October 1920, it began to prohibit him from attending non-Brahmins' political meetings. Even so, Shahu's help and guidance to the non-Brahmin movement continued as earlier.

Shahu had seen Mr. Montagu in November 1917 during the latter's visit to India to examine the reaction here to his declaration and discuss the imminent reforms. In this meeting, while demanding separate electorates to the entire non-Brahmin society including the untouchable class,[8] Shahu had said, "In India compulsory elementary education should be given on priority basis. If Swarajya is to be made a success, caste discriminations must go. Moreover, intercaste marriages should take place. Otherwise there is a risk of Swarajya being the property of just a handful of people."[9]

The visit of Montagu had stirred the politics of India. Various institutions, organizations, and leaders in the country advanced their demands. The non-Brahmin society of Maharashtra was also a party to it. Especially Shahu was putting efforts with great zeal. He was continuously following the demand of separate electorates to the entire non-Brahmin society including the untouchables by writing letters to the Secretary of State for India, the Governor General, Governors, and other British officials of high ranks. Simultaneously, he preached his views in public meetings and conferences of the non-Brahmins, "If the caste system currently in vogue is perpetuated, the Swarajya as it is thought of today would be nothing but concentration of power in a few hands! I must assert again that this should not be considered to mean that I am against Swarajya. We certainly want Swarajya. But till the ill effects of caste discrimination are done away with, under the present conditions we do need the protection and guidance of the British Government. To prevent power from concentrating in the hands of upper class minorities in Swarajya, we should have the right to elect our representatives based on caste over at least ten years. That would educate us on our rights. Once we understand our rights, we would not need communal representation."[10]

Shahu's one significant contribution to the non-Brahmin movement was his active encouragement to non-Brahmin journals. Hitherto, there was a monopoly of the Brahmins in the field of newspapers and a majority of them catered to the interests of

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Brahmins. In addition, they followed a strong policy of criticising the administration of the Kolhapur Darbar. In view of these journals' influence on public opinion, Shahu felt an urgent need for non-Brahmin journals to propagate his views as well as the non-Brahmin party's policies. Until 1917, the Journal *Dinmitra* of Mukundrao Patil was fighting a lone battle on the side of the non-Brahmins. That year two non-Brahmin journals were launched- Walchand Kothari started *Jagrook* in Poona whereas Bhagwantrao Palekar started *Jagruti* in Baroda. In the next five years many non-Brahmin journals came into existence one after the other either directly helped by Shahu or with his encouragement. Among them were some important papers such as *Deccan Rayat* (in English)of Latthe and Kothari, *Vishwabandhu* of Balwant Pisal, *Bhagwa Zenda* of Dattajirao Kurne, *Tarun Maratha* of Dinkarrao Javalkar, *Garibancha Kaivari* of Baburao Yadav, *Vijayi Maratha* of Shripatrao Shinde, *Sanjeevan* of Dattraya Randive, *Rashtraveer* of Shamrao Desai, *Shivchhatrapati* of Keshavrao Bagde and Kirtivanrao Nimbalkar, *Bahishkrut Bharat* of Ganesh Akaji Gavai and *Mooknayak* of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.[11] Shahu had given most of these papers his moral and economic support. At times, these newspapers fought with each other and Shahu had to mediate to settle the matter. He had to handle the responsibility of settling disputes between not only the non-Brahmin journals but also the non-Brahmin leaders.

Shahu's another important contribution to the non-Brahmin movement relates to his communication with the 'Justice movement' of the South and exchange of ideas with its leaders. During the years from 1919 to 1921, the Maharaja had established close relations with leaders of non-Brahmin movement of Madras such as Dr. Madhavan Nair, Sir P. Tyagraj Chettiar, C. Natesh Mudaliar and Sir Shankaran Nair. Dr. Nair was known in India and in England as a fearless leader fighting for the rights of the entire non-Brahmin and depressed population. He had visited England after the Montagu declaration and was among those who influenced political and the public opinion in England in favour of non-Brahmins. Just as Shahu in Maharashtra, Dr. Nayar was supposed to be the spearhead of the non-Brahmin movement of Madras. Dhananjay Keer has rightly honored these two great men as the 'lonely precursors of Indian social democracy and egalitarian society.[12] It has been recorded that on Dr. Nayar's return from England in January 1919, Shahu had a meeting with him in Bombay when he discussed the issue of protecting non-Brahmins interests in the impending reforms.[13] That very year Dr. Nayar again went to England with a delegation of non-Brahmin party where unfortunately he died (July). It was a big loss to the non-Brahmin movement of Madras and of entire India.

Shahu met the other important leader of non-Brahmin movement of Madras, Sir P. Tyagraj Chettiar at the Karnataka Non-Brahmin Social Conference held at Hubli in July 1920. This period saw great ascendancy of the non-Brahmin movement and turbulent election campaigns for Legislative Council. In his presidential address at this conference Shahu is on record to have remarked in the honor of sir Chettiar that '....This occasion has helped us gain a great man like him.'[14] The conference brought about the exchange of ideas between the two leaders and establish a close relationship between them. They

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continued this correspondence over subsequent years.[15]

In 1921, Shahu visited Madras in the context of the 'Tanjore case'. He was received and hosted by his good old friend Lord Willingdon. During his sojourn, he visited the office of the Justice Party and exchanged notes with the leaders of the non-Brahmin party. He realized that the Brahmin-non-Brahmin dispute was much more intense in Madras than in Mahrashtra and the non-Brahmins vehemently opposed the dominance of the Brahmins there. The non-Brahmin movement there had taught its people to despise the Aryan culture and take pride in the non-Aryan culture, a fact that strengthened the fervor of their opposition. The reaction of the Brahmins was intense. He being a non-Brahmin leader, all the Brahaminical newspapers of Madras had taken an anti-Shahu stand in the Tanjore case.[16] Even though he spent exorbitantly, Shahu lost this case because of the negative propaganda by Brahminical newspapers and the strong clout the Brahmins commanded in the judiciary.

Shahu had a great respect for the non-Brahmin movement of Madras and its leaders. He appears to have fully expressed it in his valedictory address at the aforementioned Hubli conference.. On that occasion Shahu had said, "I will explain in short what we are to do now. The non-Brahmin conferences such as this should be held everywhere. We need to learn from Madras how a non-Brahmin movement is to be successfully run. For this, let us invite orators from Madras and introduce their achievements to Poona and Bombay. I am sure they will come. Arrange a non-Brahmin conference. Arrange soon at places such as Poona, Bombay. The non-Brahmins of Poona and Bombay are far behind in tenacity in this movement as compared to those in Madras. In comparison to the learning of their leaders, our leaders look like school boys."[17]

The non-Brahmin leaders of Madras also were fully aware of the social and political awakening Shahu had brought about among the non-Brahmin masses of the Bombay Presidency and the efforts he had taken to organize the non-Brahmin movement. They had spoken in honor of his work while expressing grief on his demise. Sir P. Tyagraj Chettiar says, "Though Shri Shahu Chhatrapati was a king as a descendant of Shri Shivaji Maharaja he was a democrat among the democrats and the benefactor of the lowly castes. His life was so outstanding that he had become a force in the movements of the non-Brahmins and the untouchables. It was his ambition to spread the non-Brahmin movement all over India and give it a national character."[18] Dr. Natesh Mudliar paid a similar tribute: "In the person of Shahu Maharaja the paternal love of the Almighty and the fraternal love of humanity had centered and he utilized both to heartily serve human beings. Though his bodily form has left us, his soul still lingers here; nay, among the non-Brahmins all over India. If any one provided forceful momentum to the non-Brahmin movement, it was no one but the Maharaja."[19]

In Maharashtra, many renowned leaders such as Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Annasaheb Latthe, Walchand Kothari, Mukundrao Patil, Shripatrao Shinde, Mahadeorao Dongre, C.K.Bole, Keshavrao Bagde, K.C.Thackeray were carrying forward the movement in their own way and while doing so, occasions of disputes among them occurred frequently. On such

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occasions, Shahu would intervene in time and restrict the quarrelling factions by forging a compromise. Barring a few exceptions such as Kothari's disagreement with Shahu on a couple of occasions, it appears that all the other leaders had accepted Shahu's leadership of movement. On his part, Shahu discreetly tried to keep the reins of the movement in his hands. While doing so he never projected himself as the chief of the movement. The leaders like Jadhav, Latthe, Shinde, Patil were aware that only Shahu and no one else had the skill and authority to unite into a common force the various factions of non-Brahmins with wayward tendencies. In this regard a statement of Latthe in a letter written to Shahu during the hey days of the movement is worth consideration. Latthe writes, "It is the view not only of the Marathas and untouchables but also of all non-Brahmins that it is extremely essential for Your Highness to participate in the social undertakings in British India on behalf of the non-Brahmins. We are trying to the best of our abilities to ensure that in this regard the non-Brahmin movement does not miss the assistance of Your Highness on account of the machinations of the Brahmins....I am very well aware that Your Highness does not want leadership. But it is also true that there is no one but the Maharaja in Maharashtra who could lead the non-Brahmins successfully... June 20, 1920".[20] Similar sentiments were expressed by Bhaskarrao Jadhav in one of his letters where he says, " ....Everyone knows Your Highness's concern that the non-Brahmin party should be established on a solid foundation. Even the form this movement has taken in the Bombay Presidency is the result of Your Highness's concern. The non-Brahmin movement is especially strong in the Satara District and Brahmins are attempting to break it down....the movement of Satara District is progressing under the patronage of Your Highness. Your Highness is certainly aware that the removal of his patronage would break the movement and it would also affect badly the movement at other places as well"-(March 12, 1921).[21]

After his India visit, Mr. Montagu submitted his report on the proposed reforms to Parliament which, after having deliberated on it, passed on December 23, 1919 the Government of India Act. The reforms granted by this act became known as Montford Reforms. The Government was opposed to the idea of granting separate electorates to the non-Brahmin classes of India, the Montagu declaration had reflected. Now to mollify the non-Brahmins, it was obliged to reserve a few seats for them in the Legislative Council. The non-Brahmin society of the Madras Province benefitted the most. It obtained 28 of the total 98 elected seats.[22] Out of the 86 elected seats in Bombay province 35 were accorded to the representatives from rural areas out of which seven were reserved for the non-Brahmins (Maratha and other allied castes). Untouchables obtained two seats. The Governor was supposed to make appointments on these seats.[23] It is true that the untouchables, the Marathas, and other allied castes did not get separate electorates as demanded by Shahu but they obtained reserved seats nevertheless. Non-Brahmin party posted its candidates in these reserved as well as general constituencies. In November 1920, elections to the Legislative Councils were held. Non-Brahmins, among them C.K.Bole, Anandrao Surve, Kirtivanrao Nimbalkar, Gangaji Kalbhor, Pandurangrao Jadhav, Dajirao Vichare were elected to the Bombay Legislative

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Council while Annasaheb Latthe and Keshavrao Bagde entered the Central Legislative Council.[24]

The first phase of the non-Brahmin movement ended when the Legislative Councils were constituted as per the Montford Reforms. Shahu was blessed to watch the problems of the non-Brahmins being voiced by the non-Brahmin representatives sent to the Legislative Councils. He died soon after. It dealt a great blow to the non-Brahmin movement. After him leaders such as Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Latthe, Mukundrao Patil, Bhaurao Patil, K.C.Thackeray, Jedhe brothers, Shripatrao Shinde etc. carried forward the movement; but never again the movement was to get a powerful leader like Shahu who provided guidance to these leaders in times of need and at times also goaded them to observe the discipline of the movement. It was difficult to get a leader equal to him for no one could take his place in the social milieu of Maharashtra. On the other hand, the Congress was also undergoing changes of a fundamental kind. After the death of Tilak in 1920, Mahatma Gandhi had emerged on the scene of Indian politics and the Gandhi era had begun. One main feature of his politics was the participation of the common people of all castes and religions in the freedom struggle. As a result, the influence of the Brahmins on the Congress gradually diminished over the decade after 1920. However, the hold of the Brahmins over the Congress in Bombay Province continued during this period. In the decade that followed a majority of non-Brahmin activists entered Congress under the leadership of Keshavrao Jedhe and after that the non-Brahmin movement rapidly declined in Maharashtra.

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24.

FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Around 1920-21 the non-Brahmin movement had sustained its force in Maharashtra. The Satyashodhak activists energetically carried on with their work. The stories of their so-called assaults on Brahmins were being published by Brahminical newspapers with rabid headlines. The followers of Tilak namely Kelkar, Khaparde, Bhopatkar etc. had not allowed the heat go out of the campaign to spew poison on Shahu even after Tilak's death. Rather, they were incessantly trying to inflame passions against Shahu and create an atmosphere antagonistic to him by resurrecting the ghosts of the past such as the Kulkarni *Watan*.

KESARI'S BOMBSHELL

The Kulkarni conference held by the followers of Tilak at Tasgaon under the chairmanship of Dadasaheb Khaparde on May 18, 1921 was part of such efforts. The organizers were not happy in just condemning Shahu or fiercely campaigning against him. They wanted to create explosive situation that would lead to his downfall in peoples' esteem. Kelkar manipulated such a situation by publishing in a special issue of *Kesari* some personal and secret letters written by Maharaja more than a decade ago to senior British officials to suppress the militant activities within and without the State of Kolhapur. On the basis of these letters Kelkar wrote a special editorial under an explosive title 'Our Chhatrapati-a Traitor to Freedom'. In it Shahu was maligned in choicest words describing him as a tyrant, an authoritarian, a 'guru' propagating the British subversion of freedom movement, a traitor to Swarajya. He was presented before the readers as a Chhatrapati who betrayed his own people.[1]

Kesari's bombshell caused tremendous sensation in political and social life of Maharashtra. This was a great opportunity for other Brahiminical newspapers in the same league as *Kesari*, such as *Mahratta, Lokshahi, Loksangraha, Rajkaran, Lokmanya* etc. to attack Shahu.. The rabid news and articles carried by these journals tried hard to vilify Shahu. Some of them wrote his heart was as black as his skin; others belligerently demanded he step down from the throne as an atonement of his 'sins! While the Brahmin

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camp hammered these vicious blows, the non-Brahmin newspapers like *Jagruti. Vijayi Maratha, Rahstraveer* etc. rushed to his defense. Brahmins in fact were the actual traitors to their own people and of India's freedom, they accused. Because it is the Brahmins who kept the majority people of their own religion in intellectual and social slavery, they said. Simultaneously in many towns and villages of Maharashtra, meetings of non-Brahmins were held to condemn this reckless attack on their King and express loyalty towards him. Thus *Kesari*'s bombshell had vitiated the social atmosphere of Maharashtra with vile attacks and counter-attacks between the two groups.. The Brahmin-non-Brahmin dispute degenerated in such bitterness that even a Communist leader like Shripad Amrut Dange could not remain unaffected by the social influence of Brahminical nationalism. Dange, the young Turk reprinted the *Kesari* letters in the form of a booklet titled "Our Traitor Chhatrapati", and wrote a scathing article hurling a curse that the fire of people's resentment caused by Shahu's oppressions would not die until it destroyed the Royal family of Kolhapur![2] The fact that a Marathi intellectual of Dange's stature who dreamt of a Communist revolution could not grasp the social significance of the Brahmin-non-Brahmin conflict should be looked upon as a tragedy of the contemporary societal enterprise.

Actually one officer of the Kolhapur Darbar Rao Bahadur Mahadevrao Dongre had already published all these letters of Shahu in the form of a booklet around 1915 to provide information to the British officers and it was referred to in the Chirole case as well. As Dongre was a confidant of Shahu, it is obvious that he had prepared this booklet as instructed by Shahu himself. However, this booklet was distributed only among the senior British officials. It was expected that way. But things did not always happen the way he expected them to. During this period, he had distributed a pamphlet expressing his views on the non-cooperation movement of the Congress. It leaked from the press where it was printed, was acquired by a newspaper *Bombay Chronicle* and published under the kitschy heading 'Crush The Movement!' As a result, the Brahminical newspapers raised a massive outcry of criticism against Shahu.[3] Before this episode had settled, the editors of *Kesari* hurled the aforesaid bomb on Shahu.

SHAHU'S POLICY ON MILITANTS

What was so treacherous in this that made Shahu's opponents to declare him a traitor to India's freedom movement? These letters related to the seizure of the militants within the state of Kolhapur and those out of it. This topic has already been discussed earlier and needs no repetition. However, we need to review here a few points in the context of political situation at the time when Shahu took stringent action on militants in his State. These are as follows.

1. Though the Kolhapur militants initially comprised a heterogeneous group of castes, when the *Vedokta* conflict exploded it transformed into a group mainly of Brahmins. The Brahmins continued their hostility to Shahu even after their defeat in this episode. The Tilak party of Poona covertly supported them. Clearly, the militant movement of Kolhapur was contaminated with the hue of extremist Brahmanism.

2. In the South, there were many Brahmin Princely States. However, the militants had spared these principalities and concentrated

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on Kolhapur to make it the second most active center of militancy in Maharashtra next only to Poona. Shahu was convinced that the militants wanted to create a volatile situation in his State primarily to put him in trouble.

3. The militants of Kolhapur had become staunch enemies of Shahu in the same vein as the British. They had crossed all limits and planned to eliminate everyone by blasting a bomb in the marriage ceremony of the Kolhapur Princess. They had tried to kill Political Agent Col. Ferris as well. More than that, they were conspiring to kill Shahu himself. These attempts continued till the end of his reign.

4. When the militants became avowed enemies of Shahu, he was obliged tactically to turn to the British to suppress them following the simple dictum - 'your enemy's enemy is your friend'.

5. Shahu as a vassal of the British was obliged to take a public stand that the enemy of the British was also his enemy. Besides, as a ruler it was his duty to meet headlong the threat of militants who had created law and order problem in his State. In these circumstances, it was wrong to expect Shahu to favor the militants or turn a Nelson's eye on them instead of bringing them to book.

6. To state that Shahu was oblivious of the simple fact of the contemporary politics that nationalist militancy was a way of keeping alive the desire of national freedom would be ridiculous. He was fully aware of this and had covertly sent help to the great revolutionary patriot Aurobindo Ghosh. This underlines his sympathy towards militant activities at the national level. Nevetheless, he had to adopt strong measures against Kolhapur militants who continued to conspire against him with the aid of militants from Maharashtra. To contain them, he had to correspond with the British rulers time and again for strategic arrangements.

Shahu's policy on militancy in his principality should be evaluated in the light of these points. However, Shahu's political opponents stuck to an equation that militant activities in themselves constituted the national freedom movement and that any opposition to it was ultimately the opposition to national independence. With this mindset, they labeled Shahu's measures against militants as betrayal of freedom. In fact, many have vouched that deep in his heart Shahu, a true son of the soil and a patriot, resented British colonialists to no end and that he had a feeling of affection for the armed revolutionaries. He could not express these feelings openly, though, at times, it came out in conversations with his confidants. Tophkhane has narrated one such incident in his autobiography. Speaking of the charge of treason against him Shahu says, "I had sent with Madhavrao, the brother of Khaserao Jadhav of Baroda, Rs. 5,000 to Babu Aurobindo Ghosh and shown readiness to send more if required when the British Government had charged him with treason. Will the authors of *Kesari* explain how does this constitute betrayal of freedom?...how far would this ploy of degrading me in the eyes of people succeed? Actually even if anyone is to yell his guts out calling me a traitor to freedom, people won't believe it. For, the betrayal of freedom amounts to the betrayal of the people of whom I am a part- to me, it would mean my own betrayal. This (argument) would not stand howsoever astutely one tries to convince people about it. How can one betray oneself?"[4]

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SHAHU ON TRUE IMPORT OF SWARAJYA

The repercussions of the charge of betrayal of freedom movement hurled against Shahu by the editors of *Kesari* continued to reverberate in socio-political sphere of Maharashtra even after Shahu's death. The calumny manufactured by Brahmins was convincingly rebutted and proved wrong by many non-Brahmin newspapers such as *Jagruti, Vijayi Maratha, Rashtraveer* etc. They argued that if one understands the true meaning of Swarajya, then it was Shahu who was strongly in favour of real Swarajya and those who made these accusations were in fact its real betrayers. The editor of *Rashtraveer* Shamrao Desai says, "The confluence of learning and self-respect can be regarded by and large as the genesis of democratic Swarajya. There cannot be second opinion about the fact that if anyone tries to enrich the people by imparting education and infusing self-respect, it is the worship of Swarajya irrespective of whether it is conscious or unconscious. If Rajarshi had taken any special efforts to make his subjects literate and self-respecting, then the civilized society has to accept that he was a more genuine worshipper of Swarajya than the one who held the flag of patriotism yelling 'Swarajya is my birthright'.... If under these circumstance one says that Shahu was not a proponent of democracy, then do the people, who defended untouchability, wished to perpetuate caste discrimination, opposed compulsory education, chattered emptily asking if Marathas were to plough legislative council floors or *Wanis* to weigh the groceries, who under pretence of public service tried tricks to keep political, social, and religious power with Brahmins and yet shouted slogans such as 'Swarajya is my birth right'..... really qualify as champions of democracy?"[5]

Biographers of Shahu such as Latthe and Keer have upheld this line of thought. Keer comments, "If this question is considered from the point of view of the interests of 95 percent people in Maharashtra, Shahu cannot be accused as either the betrayer of people or of Swarajya. Rather such epithets would better fit the journal *Kesari* which over the last 40 years has been vehemently opposing social and religious reforms and development of the backward classes"[6]

From the above deliberation, it becomes clear that there was a difference of opinion between the nationalist Brahmins and non-Brahmin intellectuals over the import of the concept of Swarajya. The Brahmin nationalists narrowly interpreted Swarajya as only political rights while the non-Brahmins demanded that in Swarajya they should get social rights along with political rights; nay, the social rights should be gained before the realization of political rights. Shahu in many of his addresses has expressed his thoughts on Swarajya. According to him, the non-Brahmin society first had to deserve the rights to be enjoyed in Swarajya. For that to happen, caste discrimination should end and the status of the lower castes should improve. They should at least get the benefit of primary education. In the 1917 conference of Khamgaon he had said, "The clamour for Swarajya is heard from all corners. Whether we deserve Swarajya or not is itself an extremely important question. We definitely want Swarajya (but)... until our caste discriminations and jealousies persist we will keep fighting among ourselves and endanger our own interests. To get rid of

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our internal squabbles and to deserve Swarajya, it is extremely essential to overthrow the evil breeding caste system."[7]

Shahu's opponents would often misinterpret such statements and yell that he was against granting rights of Swarajya to his subjects. Countering these allegations Shahu in his speech of 1920 has clearly stated his stand on Swarajya. He says, "Editors of some newspapers have made allegations against me that I am not ready to grant Swarajya to my people. This is a false allegation made by twisting my statement to spread misunderstandings about me and I feel sorry for that. In the address on the strength of which this allegation is made I had said, 'unless and until the educational standards of the non-Brahmin society improve and come at least to some extent to the standard of the upper classes, I would not dare to change the status-quo towards reforms by granting rights to the people in the administration of my State'. This would make clear how my statement has been perverted. I do not find it safe to grant Swarajya unless the electorate understands its rights and becomes capable enough to use them, and even the lowest castes get a taste of learning. Such rights if granted when 60 to 70 percent of the people are not ready for it, fall in the hands of the minority and in our country ridden with caste discriminations, they would accrue to only one caste providing it an opportunity to subjugate others. The ancient history of the Aryans and non-Aryans and a more recent history of the *Peshwas* would prove my point. With the control of means of self- aggrandizement, even good men turn bad and tyrants. It does not need elaboration then that how much care needs to be taken to prevent power going to those who have kept others rotting in slavery over generations and whose desire to continue with the same behavior is clearly evident."[8]

In this very speech Shahu had expressed his wish to grant rights of Swarajya to his subjects. He says, "From the way I am trying to spread elementary and higher education among my subjects, you will certainly make out that my policy is to grant Swarajya to my subjects as soon as possible. If my subjects were to pass at least Marathi III standard, I would have happily granted them rights of governance and retired myself for rest today. I have decided that I would request my subjects and take only that much amount for my personal expenses that my ancestors and me have been taking over generations and the rest would be spent by the representatives of the people for enjoyment and development of the people..... Today I have to do all the work of administration. People are only obliged to pay the taxes. Later on, they would be responsible for payment as well as appropriate expenditure of the taxes. But my subjects should be adequately prepared to handle this responsibility at least partly if not fully. I am of the opinion that instead of a part of my population becoming thoroughly educated the whole of my population should get elementary education. If rights are conferred when 70 to 80 per cent of the populace is not adequately prepared to exercise them, then power would concentrate in the hands of this learned minority creating a *swadeshi* bureaucracy. We are well acquainted with the excesses of this literate bureaucracy."[9]

".....The dispute over precedence between political and social reforms is not a sound dispute. These reforms are not separate but intermingled, as if they are the two wheels of the cart of national development! Would it be sound to carry

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the cart on one wheel? This is common sense. The experience of the Western countries tells the same story. If anyone says that political reforms first, social reforms are not urgent, then be certain there is something fishy. Such talks are cunning poetry. Actually, it would be correct to grant the rights of Swarajya only after the British Government disseminates education properly by taking the task of its propagation under its direct command."[10]

The British opened the doors of education. The opportunity to drink the nectar of knowledge, not available even during the times of Ram and Krishna, was made available to all. But who benefitted? Shahu feared repetition of same phenomenon with the rights of Swarajya.... He says, "Though the nectar of learning was made available to all, very few non-Brahmins benefitted out of it because the texts mostly remained in the custody of Brahmins. Brahmins benefitted the most. As such, they are now clamoring most vigorously for the right to Swarajya and also planning to grab those rights when granted. People who are trying to prevent such concentration of rights and allot other castes their just share appear traitors to them. Those asking communal representations are being heaved with choicest abuses and curses."[11]

DEMAND FOR COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION

Though Shahu insisted on right to elementary education before Swarajya, different winds were blowing in the country. As a result of the force of the Home Rule movement, display of strength by Congress-League alliance, and the changed international scenario, the British were left with no alternative but to grant the Indians some substantial rights of *Swarajya*. Not that Shahu was unaware of the situation. However, he was forcefully advancing his stand to bring to the attention of the rulers that if the non-Brahmins and untouchables were not given a share in the rights of Swarajya the conferred rights would accrue to the elite class of Brahmins. And therefore, he had put forth the demand of separate electorates for non-Brahmin and untouchables and formed the organization of a non-Brahmin movement to achieve this demand. Brahmin nationalists were vehemently opposed to this demand. They perceived the demand as made out of jealousy towards Brahmins. Commenting on this attitude, Shahu said, "These days some political Brahmins are saying that the Brahmins have been leading hitherto and even now. Therefore, to pull them back jealous demands such as communal representations are being made. This is not true. We request our Brahmin brothers that you have gone too long on this way. You have the strength to run. We are only crawling now, trying falteringly to stand somehow. You are ready to carry us along to save our pains out of your love for us. But your love and concern would result in our loss. If you do not let us crawl or falteringly stand, we would be handicapped permanently. Therefore, you should admire our crawling and standing up and encourage us. Do not prevent. We are struggling to gain strength. Your understanding that we are doing it out of jealousy is wrong; this is what I humbly ask of those who call themselves our leaders."[12]

Shahu has elaborated his concept of communal representations as that of Swarajya in a broader perspective. According to him import of communal

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representation was not restricted to mere representation to backward castes in the Legislative Council. He says ".....People of all castes gaining strength to fulfil their responsibilities in various fields such as industry, education, government service, etc. is what I call communal representation. I think it is my duty to encourage those who are left behind to come to the fore. I extend my hand to pull up my subjects and the downtrodden out of the murk. Parents need not devote attention to their grown-up children capable of self-care. But parents have to care for those who are minor, ignorant, who cannot walk or cannot even stand on their own. Some are to be given helping hand; some are to be carried on shoulders. The parents doing this are supposed to be performing their duty. Accusing them of partiality only because they do not treat all children equally would be inhuman. It is with this consideration that I am encouraging those castes that are placed worst."[13]

These thoughts of Shahu do accord with his social policies and his demand for communal representation, a sublime background of social justice.

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25.

LOYALTY TO THE BRITISH

British sovereignty was established all over India from Kanyakumari to Kashmir by the second half of the nineteenth century. The British had completed the subjugation of India until the reign of Lord Dalhousie. Some states they won and confiscated while some they brought under their sovereignty as vassal states. They had begun a spree of devouring even these vassal principalities under some or the other pretext.

POLICY OF IMPERIALISTS

However, the revolt of 1857 put a break to this brazen imperial policy and the Queen's Proclamation next year granted some security to the Princely States. The Queen solemnly promised to observe piously the pacts and treaties the East India Company had entered into with these states. Henceforth a Princely State would not be annexed; however, the right of the Empire to depose any ruler on the pretext of want of law and good governance still hung as Damocles' sword over the vassal's head. The British had used this right in some cases like the State of Baroda. As such, the titular Indian rulers were well aware of the limits of their power and the unlimited clout of the empire. Though they were granted freedom in internal administration, they were to enjoy this freedom under the British guidance. For, the British believed that as the sovereign power the ultimate responsibility of law and order rested with them.

In gist, the vassal had to govern within the limits of power granted by the British. Unswerving loyalty to the British Crown was the primary qualification. The Princely State of Kolhapur and its ruler Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja was not an exception to this rule. Not only had the British charted his limits to him but also were more vigilant and watchful of him as compared to the other rulers. This was because he did not belong to the league of other Princes in the country who wallowed their life in luxuries and sumptuousness. He had undertaken the task of awakening the downtrodden and the browbeaten, the majority of ignorant masses of not only his State but also the entire country as a service to nation. The British who called themselves the champions of democracy and human freedom could not openly oppose the task undertaken by Shahu but also could

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not ignore the fact that the awakening of the ignorant masses was pregnant with the threat of a bolt to the Imperial Power in India. Both struggles, the struggle of Tilak for political freedom and the battle of Shahu for social emancipation would eventually lead the Indians to national independence. Unfortunately for the Indians and fortunately for the British, there was neither coordination nor any harmony between these two struggles. This was mainly because the struggle for political freedom was against the British whereas the struggle for social freedom was against the orthodox traditionalists some of whom spearheaded the struggle for political freedom. The nationalists (majority Brahmins) insistent on political freedom were unwilling to grant social freedom to their own brethren. The leaders of the struggle for social freedom asked that what moral right did these people have, who were not ready to concede rights of social freedom to their own compatriots, to demand rights of political freedom. This question had put the nationalists in a quandary but also proved helpful to the British to apply the policy of 'divide and rule'. The British sympathy and occasional assistance to the Satyashodhak and the non-Brahmin movements was not part of their liberal policy but a manoeuver of their cunning politics. Every angle of the triangle formed out of the British rulers, Brahmin nationalists, and non-Brahmin social reformers was not only well aware of the politics of the other two but also helped the other to subdue the third whenever needed.

The relationship between Shahu and the British Government should be studied with this perspective. . Over half a century before Shahu ascended the throne quite a few kings minor in age had reigned one after another in Kolhapur. As such, the British had tightened their noose around the State of Kolhapur.Shahu was trying to make his government independent as far as possible by loosening its grip. In such conditions when the calamities like poisoning of Col. Wray affair cropped up, he would be pushed into delicate situations. We have earlier referred to the reminiscence narrated by Tophkhane in this regard. Talking about his predicament in the Col. Wray affair, Shahu had said, "The British Government wished to implicate me in charge of attempted poisoning. If successful, they could have eliminated me throwing in some dungeon and confiscated the State declaring the royal family of Kolhapur as unfit to govern.....However, I was extremely careful not to allow anything fall in governments hand that would help them destroy me."[1]

'LOYALTY' AND 'TREASON'

Under such circumstances, administering the State and simultaneously retaining the favour of the British rulers was like walking on a tight rope. It was part of Shahu's political obligation to express continually his loyalty towards the British Government while performing this walk. Consequently, Shahu appears to be expressing his loyalty time and again, during meetings with British officials, in correspondence with them and in public meetings. If a scholar looks superficially at his expressions of loyalty to the Raj without taking into consideration his compulsions and the precarious circumstances in which he stood, he will easily find Shahu pro-British. That, however, would not be an accurate evaluation of the circumstances. For then, such accusation of appeasement of the British can be levelled against men such as the *Pitamaha* of Congress Dadabhai Naoroji,

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Justice Ranade, Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi etc. All these men openly professed themselves as loyalists while agitating for political freedom. Such acknowledgement of loyalty and simultaneous conduct of their movement was a necessity of those times. In this context, the declaration issued by Tilak in 1914 at the beginning of the First World War professing his loyalty and promise of assistance to the British in their war efforts is worth consideration. Except armed revolutionaries, no leader of any political party of those times could afford to call himself a non-loyalist. For, in those times, not being loyal was considered treason and it was impossible for a traitor to run political or social movement of any kind.

The British Government more than once accused Tilak of treason for his vehement criticism of the rulers in *Kesari* and sentenced him to imprisonment. Criticizing the unjust and tyrannical activities of the government does not amount to treason was his counter argument. He says, " There is no treason whatsoever in bringing home to the government the complaints and grievances of the people or explaining to people the shortcomings of the government and enabling them to seek legal redress irrespective of whether such acts are liked or otherwise by the government." Moreover, " It is the duty of every journalist to explain to people things that are unjust, arouse public opinion against such things and ask people to seek legal remedies. There is nothing in this that would harm the state. Rather the rectification of the injustice would lead to the contentment of the people thereby strengthening the state. Calling the author of such articles as a traitor is tantamount to charging a person suggesting particular repairs in a house with attempt to set the house ablaze."[2] Lokmanya's argument was flawless. However, wisdom had no value under the British power.

In the aforesaid declaration of 1914 Tilak says, ".... My efforts are not meant to do away with the British rule; the atrocious activities of the militants are against my nature and culpable". Expressing his opinion that it is the duty of the Indian people to assist the British to the best of their abilities in their war effort he finally says, "This proves that our loyalty towards the Government and our desire to assist it are natural and unyielding and in such situations we fulfil our duties and responsibilities loyally."[3] However to conclude on the basis of the above statement that Tilak was loyalist would be totally unhistorical. Tilak's expression of loyalty towards the British Government should be considered but a part of diplomacy or a tactical manoeuver typical of the political field he had chosen. Soon he changed his stand of co-peration with the British and entered the confrontation mode. However, he never allowed his so-called loyalty to impede his mission even while he was fighting for political freedom. It should be noted that in the early days of World War I , Gandhi too had held that Indians should assist the British in their efforts to protect the Empire. He has opined: "simple and the easy way to achieve Swaraj is to participate in the protection of the British Empire"[4]

Actually, the loyalty the Indian leaders expressed towards the Crown of England cannot be regarded as genuine irrespective of whether it was expressed by Justice Ranade, Lokmanya Tilak, or Shahu Chhatrapati. For no true patriot would ever desire to see his motherland permanently enslaved by a foreign power. The only

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difference was that some thought of this foreign power as a design of providence meant to continue over indefinite period to infuse wisdom in their ignorant compatriots; some thought of it as essential to protect the rights of masses from the elite classes, while some wished the end of this design and achieve Swaraj at the earliest. The only question was that for how long should the foreign rule continue? No one desired it to perpetuate. If this circumstance is given a thought, the loyalty of the stalwarts in the political or social fields can be accurately evaluated and it would then become possible to probe whether Shahu was truely loyal or otherwise.

While discussing this topic in Shahu's biography, Dr.Ramesh Jadhav has inferred that, Shahu's declared loyalty to the British was a pretence.[5] However, Dr.Y.D.Phadke has questioned this contention saying that if the available evidence was carefully studied this inference could not be accepted convincingly. Dr.Phadke's opinion is to a large extent based on the studious examination of the mutual correspondence between Shahu and the British that relates to the suppression of the militants and the Brahmin nationalists.[6] If only the correspondence is considered as evidence (and it is official and in plenty) there is no reason why anyone should disagree with Dr. Phadke. However, the other evidence that contrasts the earlier evidence of mutual letters should not be ignored. For example, the story of Shahu's assistance to revolutionary Aurobindo Ghosh as narrated by Tophkhane in his autobiography cannot be ruled out as mere 'hear-say'. For, Tophkhane was a close associate and an affectionate friend of Shahu. His narration should be regarded as authentic. Dr. Phadke himself at other places has regarded as authentic the narration in such memoirs written in a later period. For example, as we have already seen earlier, Dr. Phadke,- as regards the assistance provided by Tilak to Chaphekar brothers in the Rand murder case- has inferred that Tilak had a fair idea before hand of the assassination and he had arranged for Chaphekars' covert shelter after the assassination. Dr. Phadke's this conclusion is based on the strength of biographies, memoirs ,autobiographies written during the later period.[7] Why then the same rules should not be applied to Shahu as are applied to Tilak. If they were so applied, it would help reveal the nationalist image of Shahu concealed behind the hazy panes of history beyond all available official evidence. And then the picture of his loyalty would become more clear.

SHAHU AS SEEN BY DIFFERENT PEOPLE

While discussing the loyalty of Shahu Chhatrapati Dr.Phadke has raised one more issue. He says that irrespective of the vigor with which Tilak and Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad 'professed loyalty' to the Crown, the British always remained suspicious of their intentions and considered them enemies. To clarify better his point in context of Sayajirao, Dr.Phadke has advanced the evidence of the classified documents of the British which unequivocally maintain that, "...Among all the Raja -Maharajas of India, Sayajirao is the only princely ruler who has not helped the British in suppressing the activities of treason. It appears that the declarations, about his loyalty, if at all he makes, are made unwillingly." Dr. Phadke argues that since not a single letter accusing Shahu in this fashion published or unpublished has

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become available it is difficult to accept the inference that his loyalty was a façade. Further, the available evidence makes it clear that the British considered Sayajirao as their 'foe' while Shahu a 'dear friend'".[8]

Shahu's covert assistance to revolutionary movements has been referred to earlier. Dr. Phadke has set aside all these references as 'hearsay' evidence and made the above statement only on the strength of contemporary genuine documents and classified British correspondence. If all the evidences of Shahu's assistance to the revolutionaries are considered counterfeit, there is no impediment in accepting Phadke's proposition as absolutely true; even we would have accepted it provided Shahu was a simpleton with a flat personality with no subtlety of mind and intelligence. The fact is Shahu was altogether a different man. The evidences of people such as Tophkhane, Thackeray, Maharshi Shinde who were close to Shahu and who could discuss with him on any subject from politics to social enterprises reveal Shahu in an altogether different light. Thackeray has said," The Maharaja was such an outstanding person, he would be seen in different colours by different people. Different men would see him from a different points of view and he would appear different. Nay, I unambiguously declare that he was a great man with a multi-dimensional personality. To *Chitpawans* he would appear like a foe, to the *Deshasths* a religious rebel. To the Bombay and Indian Governments he was a 'dear friend'. To the non-Brahmins he was a parent while to the untouchables he appeared like an incarnation of god."[9] In this way, different people saw different aspects of his personality. Dear friend was one such aspect the British had seen. That certainly was not his true and only colour. Shahu was a wholesome person with multiple shades. In the words of Thackeray he was an astute politician and a statesman.[10] It would be naive to expect a statesman with a flat personality and without multitudes of dimensions to his character.

Maharshi Shinde has also tried to probe the complex personality of Shahu. He says, "King Shahu was not a mere Maratha or a non-Brahmin. He was a complete incarnation of a nationalist of the new era. He knew well of the sting of the foreign rulers' hands. Being a Maratha to the core, guerilla tactics was part of his blood. It now began to show clearly in his behavior. Had he not adopted these manoeuvres, he could not have accomplished the task of awakening the people of Maharashtra and making them self-reliant. The pernicious attacks of Tilak and the Brahmin brigade were a direct challenge for open confrontation. Shahu refrained from such direct conflict. However, this servant of the nation did wreck their bones so smoothly that both Brahmin brigade and the British bureaucracy were forced to ponder over this *Kolhapuri Puzzle* and grudgingly admire its qualities. This description might lead many to assume Shahu to be a great revolutionary in the same league as Lenin. That is not true. To be accurate he was a natural outcome of the process of development of Maharashtra."[11] Shinde's observations make us think whether Shahu's dealings with the British were a part of his guerilla tactics which came to him instinctively. The puzzle of Shahu so imponderable for the contemporary bureaucracy and the Brahmindom appears even more complex and absorbing. Dr. Phadke seems to have liked the word *Kolhapuri Puzzle* from Shinde's statement.

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In solving this puzzle, what Dr. Phadke says befits a true researcher. He says, "Many including me have tried to find a solution to the *Kolhapuri puzzle* called Shahu Chhatrapati. Though this puzzle may be claimed to have been solved by some, no one should think he has found the right answer. Only thing one can do is while solving a puzzle it is possible to take care that one makes minimum of errors as compared to the others."[12]

The present author is trying to solve this puzzle but nowhere has he claimed that he has found the right answer! And certainly, he has taken care as advised by Dr. Phadke to keep the errors to the minimum.

PHULE AND SHAHU- GRATITUDE TOWARDS THE RAJ

Many national leaders like Justice Ranade, Pherozshah Mehta thought that the British rule was a divine dispensation. While expressing this feeling they sited many a positive aspects of the British rule such as peace and order established by the British in this country, material improvements like education, railways, post and telegraph, rule of law, introduction to the values of equality before law, individual freedom, liberalism, democracy, nationalism and so on. Not that they were not able to see the slavery imposed by the British on their country. However, they knew well that the country owed the aforementioned benefits to the British and it was in the larger interests of the country to be loyal to the rulers. Thus it was that during the first era of the Congress history the Union Jack would be unfurled during the annual sessions of the Congress and the British national anthem was sung.[13]

Mahatma Phule appears to have frequently expressed similar loyalty to the Crown in his writings. However, there was a difference in Phule's and Congress leaders' evaluation of the British rule. Ranade, Mehta were satisfied with the above-mentioned benefits of the British rule to the Indian people whereas Phule was happy that this rule had freed his *shudra* and *atishudra* compatriots from the tyranny of Brahmin autocracy and despotic rulers. He has unambiguously mentioned his contentment in his book titled *Ishara*. He says, ".....In this way the Almighty God wrenched the authority from and punished according to their crimes the kings and their fellow caste-men who, drunk with power tyrannized the subjects, and becoming compassionate, He bestowed on his miserable *shudra* and *atishudra* subjects an extremely just, beneficial, upright and peaceful rule of the British Government. As such the gentry is very grateful to the Almighty and prayed day and night that "Oh Lord, let this rule perpetuate for us." For in this rule the gentry was finally absolved of all the tyranny perpetrated on it in religious, ethical, political and many other spheres under the previous reign (Brahmin autocracy)."[14] All this does not mean that Phule had become a sycophant of the British. It should be noted that he never spared the blows of his pen even to the British rulers who ignored the interests of the masses rotting in ignorance and penury.[15]

Shahu appears to have joined these patriots in accepting the idea that British rule was a divine dispensation and may have expressed his loyalty in this vein. He says, "It is the wish of the providence that we have become part of the British Empire for the betterment of India. Our interests have merged with theirs."[16] Shahu also has said that Indians should remain loyal to the

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British to express their gratitude. His thinking in this respect is not much different from the views of the national leaders such as Ranade and Pherozshah Mehta or those expressed by revolutionary reformers like Mahatma Phule. Out of the three reasons that Shahu has advanced as responsible for the contemporary development and awakening in India, two, namely the peaceful Government of the British and the English education, are related to the British rule. Explaining the magnitude of debt of the English education on Indian people, Shahu says, ".....What an enormous advantage it is that the Indians have acquired a third eye from English education! We have begun to know who we were, what was our condition in the past, what is our condition now and what would be our condition next! This awareness gives great pleasure."[17] He seems to have articulated his optimism that those who gave us the nectar of English learning, one day would confer the rights of freedom: "Those who gave us this nectar would one day certainly free us from bondage. Whatever you want, ask the Government in the same way a child asks from parents. With love, the Government would definitely give. I am absolutely sure that things never happen out of compulsion the way they happen out of love."[18]

Shahu has clearly stated that the principle of equality of the British, which treats people of all castes and religions equally in political governance is a great attribute that has gratified the Indian people and for that they should remain loyal to the Government : "The British for the first time applied the principle of equality to administration. They declared that all subjects have equal rights, similar laws would be applied to all, injustice of granting severe or paltry punishments on the basis of castes would not be permitted. Their missionaries were the first to establish schools and set examples of treating the untouchable children with affection. The other European countries like Holland, Belgium do not develop their colonial subjects by educating them or otherwise. However, the British are good at this. Moreover, they are granting us Swarajya when many among us are reluctant to accept it. This is so great of them! That we should remain loyal to the British Empire which treats everyone with equality need not be reiterated. We are under their many many obligations."[19]

There was an important difference between Shahu and other social and political leaders expressing their gratitude towards British rule. The politicians could always and the reformers occasionally criticize the Government's blameworthy policies or acts severely. They could occasionally tear the government to pieces. However, Shahu could not enjoy this liberty. Moreover, the senior British officials are seen advising him against attending and delivering speeches in public functions outside his State. Actually, within him he had the urge to lead the non-Brahmins not only in social field but also in the political field. To protect the interests of the non-Brahmins he wanted permission from the British Government to fight the 1920 elections to the Legislative Councils. The Government of course rejected his demand.[20] He had numerous political limitations as a vassal ruler. And yet, he adopted the task of redemption of the non-Brahmin masses with all its limitations.

In Shahu's relations with the British, the event of laying foundation of the two memorials proposed by him, namely 'Maratha War Memorial' and 'Shivaji

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Memorial' at Poona at the hands of the British Crown Prince was of special significance. Shahu arranged the Poona visit of the Prince with great efforts and diplomacy. On this occasion thousands of *Patils* and *Rayats* from all over Maharashtra had gathered in Poona out of their respect for Shahu. Their huge gathering underlined the extraordinary influence Shahu had on them and their deep faith in him. The Prince's visit in a way was an honour of the gallant *Kshatra* Marathas with martial traditions. Besides, the Prince also publicly honoured Shivaji the Great by calling him the creator of a nation state. Actually, it was a tribute paid by the British Prince to a great national personality like Shivaji. At the root of these events was the organization and foresight of Shahu. His aim was to brighten the dignity of the Marathas and arouse in them the pride for their glorious martial tradition. Undoubtedly, it was fulfilled to a large extent.

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26.

MINORITIES

Though a Maratha Prince, Shahu was not the king of Marathas alone. He was the king of people of all castes and religions in his State such as Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Parsee, Christian etc. residing in his State. He looked upon himself as such. Especially he seems to have shown special concern for the Muslim community. His sentiment that the relationship between Hindus and Muslims of this country should be based on mutual trust and understanding has been expressed right from 1894 when he ascended the throne. Religious riots between Hindus and Muslims took place for the first time in Bombay in 1893 and its ramifications were seen in Poona the very next year during the Ganesh festival. Riots took place in Poona as well and the relations between the two communities were estranged. Tilak sided with the Hindus. The Government had ensued legal proceedings against the Tilak partisans.[1] On this backdrop the felicitation of the new Chhatrapati was organized by the *Sarvajanik Sabha* in Poona. On behalf of the *Sabha*, Gopal Krishna Gokhale read the plaque of honour to be accorded to Shahu. It is on records that in his brief reply, Shahu referred to recent riots and advised the activists of the *Sabha* to bring about a compromise of peace between Hindus and Muslims.[2] Clearly, Shahu had understood right from the beginning, i.e. in the last decade of the 19th century, that mutual amity between Hindus and Muslims was essential for the well-being of the country. This belief persisted until the end of his life. In an address of 1920, he had asserted that Hindus and Muslims are but different parts of the same Nation.[3]

EDUCATION OF MUSLIMS

In the contemporary society barring the Brahmins all other castes including Marathas, Jains, Lingayats and Muslims had remained backward in education. Shahu was afraid that they would remain backward unless they developed a liking for learning. Therefore, he was trying to bring home to them the importance of education. He wished that the Muslim community too should step forward for education. In 1902, the Muslims of Kolhapur had arranged a function to celebrate the safe return of Shahu from England. Shahu took this opportunity to appeal to Muslim leaders to start a movement of mass awakening on

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education among their community and set up educational institutions. He had assured them of complete support from the Darbar in this undertaking.[4] However, the apathy for education among Muslims was so extreme they failed to grab the golden opportunity provided by Shahu. Muslim community remained inert. But Shahu did not. He admitted ten willing Muslim students to the recently established Victoria Maratha Boarding in Kolhapur and initiated the Muslim community to education. One of these students was Sheikh Mohammad Yunus Abdulla, a resident of a small town of Athni in Karnataka. Later, after he completed education, Shahu appointed him as a *Mamledar* in his State. He was devolved with the task of suffusing a love for education in the Muslim community.[5]

We have already mentioned earlier that in 1906, Shahu himself took initiative and called a meeting of respectable people among the Muslims and founded the Mohammedan Education Society, assumed its chair and appointed Yusuf Abdullaha as the secretary. Particularly important is the fact that Shahu had encouraged and even generously assisted various castes and religions in his State to set up students hostels; but he had never assumed office in any of these hostel institutions. He made an exception of the Muslim community. He accepted the chair ex-officio in their institution. This was indicative of his concern for this community. Later, a Muslim Boarding was established. Income of Muslim holy places was assigned to this boarding. An order relating to one such transfer of income is available. In that he says, "....In Kolhapur boardings of backward classes have been established. Except for the Muslims, other boardngs are doing well. The economic condition of the Muslim boarding is not sound. It is essential that Muslims become well educated just as the people of the other castes. However, they will not improve unless the monetary condition of their boarding improves. As such it has been approved that from *Kasba* Rookdi, *Petha* Hathkanangle, of the total amount collected keeping aside an amount of Rs. 500 for the ceremonials of Hajrat Peer, repairs of the shrines etc. the rest shall be sent every year to the secretary to the King Edward Mohammedan Education Society, Kolhapur. The subject amount shall be defrayed by the society according to the rules."[6] In a similar fashion incomes of the holy places in the city of Kolhapur namely the Nihal mosque, Ghodpir, Babu Jamal and Bara Imam were diverted towards the Muslim boarding. Of course, the Mohammedan society mentioned above was to defray the essential expenses of these shrines.[7]

Soon an open space of 25,000 sq. feet near the Maratha Boarding was allotted for the Muslim boarding. Moreover a donation of Rs. 5,500 and teakwood from the State forests free of cost was granted for the building. The foundation was ceremonially laid at the hands of Shahu's tutor Fraser. In due course, a sprawling double storied building was raised. Shahu granted Rs. 250 per year and lands that brought annual income worth Rs. 6,000 to 7,000 were assigned to this institution. Shahu had made these lavish donations to ensure education of Muslim children.. Even the Maratha boarding had not received so generous a bounty![8] This was because as compared to the Marathas the Muslims were far more indifferent to education. Therefore, Shahu felt it was essential to care more for them. In the non- Brahmin conference at Hubli he had said, "Muslims always perform the works of Kshatriyas just as the Marathas. Most of their customs

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and practices are the same as those of Marathas. There were many great Muslim Sardars in the Maratha army just as the Maratha Sardars were in the Muslim armies. Recently, Maratha and Muslim soldiers have fought shoulder to shoulder in the British army."[9]

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Throughout his reign, Shahu insisted on emotional and social unity between Hindus and Muslims. He planned several schemes and performed experiments towards its realization. One such experiment was unique. He issued orders directing the income of the holy shrines of one community towards the expenses of the holy shrine of the other. For example, one order directing part of the income of the Patgaon *Math* of the Maunibaba to defray the expenses of the construction of a mosque is available. What is noticeable is that the Crown Prince Rajaram had signed this order.[10] A similar kind of arrangement was made as regards the holy place at Rookdi village. Part of the income accrued to the shrine of the Pir at Rookdi was utilized daily to light the lamps in the temple of goddess Ambabai.[11] One more experiment was occasioned by the marriage ceremony of the Princess Akkasaheb. Many Maratha marriages were solemnized on this occasion. Some Muslim marriages were also arranged simultaneously. The lifetime allowances of these newly married couples were to be arranged. This makes clear that the Muslim community was equally dear to Shahu as was the Maratha community.

Like Shivaji the Great, Shahu too never detested the Muslims as belonging to a foreign religion. Rather there are ample examples that testify his respect for Islam. The Muslim masses could not understand their holy book Quran as it was written in Arabic. Shahu wished that even a common person should understand the religious principles espoused in Quran and therefore had begun its translation project in Marathi. He had spent an amount of Rs. 25,000 from the treasury for this work. Unfortunately, his untimely death left the project unfinished.[13] Commenting on this, Hussain Jamadar, a Satyashodak activist, says, "There is no doubt that if the translation of Quran were to be completed on time, a wellspring of Muslim reformist activity could have begun in Kolhapur long ago. For, even today, the learning of Quran imparted in Madrasas is no more than mere memorization by rote. If the adherents understand the true meaning of the religious text, the monopoly of the *Mulla-Maulavis* would come to an end, superstitions reduced and society become knowledgeable. There is no doubt that Shahu had embarked on the instruction of the Muslin community with this objective."[14]

Evidence is aplenty of Shahu's economic assistance and grants of open spaces for the construction of mosques during his reign. Kolhapur city was expanding. New settlements were being founded. Muslims in such new colonies would be put to discomfort for want of a place to offer *Namaz*. In the newly founded colony of Shahupuri there was no mosque. As such to avoid discomfort to the Muslims in that area Shahu granted land for a mosque and an additional Rs.1,000 towards construction.[15] Shahu's assistance to the Patgaon mosque has already been referred to. One more example of a similar kind relates to the Bohri community in Kolhapur. Bohri was an affluent merchant caste among the Muslims. They did not have a separate mosque of their own to offer *Namaz*. As such, their leader Tayaballi

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requested Shahu for help. Shahu kindly allotted a piece of 5000 sq. feet in the heart of the city for the mosque.[16] While founding the town of Radhanagari. Shahu considered the religious needs of the residents along with their material requirement. He constructed two temples for Hindus and created two holy places namely Hajrat Pir Gaibisaheb and Shahaj Mahal for the Muslims. He provided for their expenses and offered a special donation of Rs. 75 to the Muslim shrines.[17] Obviously, Shahu not only catered to the material needs like education of the Muslims but also took care of their religious requirements.. There are many examples of Hindu kings donating to Muslim places of prayer such as mosques, *Dargahs* etc; but examples of constructing mosques and *Dargahs* for them out of State expenses would be rare. We no longer need to emphasis how Shahu had deep affection for the Muslims.

COMPULSION OF MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

In 1917, Shahu issued two orders for protection of the interests of the Muslim community. His first order says, "....According to the Muslim practice, any one can solemnize a marriage and the Qazi is not an obligatory requirement. However, in a court dispute a marriage not solemnized by a Qazi shall not be regarded as legal. This order shall be conveyed to all offices for their knowledge and shall be published in the gazette –June 5, 1917."[18] In order to impart a legal character to the marriage solemnized by Qazi, Shahu shortly issued a second order making it imperative for Qazis to maintain their marriage register officially : Qazis at places such as Malkapur, Bavda, Kagal, Karveer and Torgal etc. have been solemnizing marriages within their limits. All marriages officiated by them would be considered legal. Similarly, the marriages solemnized by the Mullas and *Gumastas** who were granted such rights by Qazis within their limits shall also be deemed legal. Each Qazi and *Gumasta* shall maintain a register and record every marriage. The concerned shall keep a register as per the decided format and get it signed and stamped from the Huzur office... every marriage recorded in the register shall be deemed as evidence in court and for other such matters. Marriages that do not follow this procedure shall not be considered legal.-July 9, 1917."[19] Shahu accepted the right of the Muslim religious priests to solemnize marriages and did not interfere in it. However, official registration of such marriages was made a legal compulsion. This was in the interests of the Muslims, especially the Muslim women. In independent India, even today the record of a marriage solemnized by Qazi is not registered with the government stamp; it is not thought to be essential. In Maharashtra the Muslim Satyshodhak movement has been demanding that such registration should be made mandatory.[20] Compared to this, Shahu's action at that time shows how far ahead of time he was.

ROYAL PATRONAGE TO MERITORIUS

It was no wonder that Shahu who had so much affection for the Muslim masses offered generous royal patronage to accomplished Muslims. Some of these fortunate accomplished men were a notebale bulladeer Shahir Lahri Haider, a great artist in the field of painting Abalal

*An agent or a deputy.

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Rahiman, the famous vocalist Alladiya Khansahib who had attained fame all over India for his outstanding vocal performances, the pugilist Balekhan Vastad who trained Shahu himself in the art of wrestling. Shahir Lahri Haider had become the apple of his eye. He was one of Shahu's daily associates who accompanied him in his historical horse cart. Shahu had happily catered to Abalal Rahiman who had become almost a whimsical sage or an *Avliya*. He had showered Alladiya Khansahib with brotherly love and had added to the prestige of Balekhan Vastad by making him a court dignitary. Not only did these accomplished men obtained the royal patronage, they were also blessed with the million-dollar affection of the king of Kolhapur. For them no other reward in the world had any value as compared to his affection. This was precisely why Alladiya Khansahib did not turn his back on a small state like Kolhapur even after attaining fame as the greatest contemporary vocalist in India. He considered it a great honor throughout his life to be in the service of Shahu Maharaja !

One anecdote related to Bhurjikhan, the son of Alladiya Khansahib, is worth mentioning. Bhurjikhan was blessed with the legacy of a great voice from his father. However while he was still learning from his father he fell prey to an ailment called *Motizara* that affected his throat and ruined his voice. It refused to respond to any medication. Khansahib lost all hope and stopped training him. When Shahu learned of this, he called Bhurjikhan and appointed him in the temple of Goddess Mahalaxmi for daily vocal service of one hour. Shahu ordered, 'Sing whatever way you can, but do sing.' Bhurjikhan began to attend the temple daily for the service. The compulsory one-hour practice began to recuperate his voice. So much so that one day, Alladiya Khansahib, while walking past the temple, heard him sing and was astonished. He had given up all hopes of improvement in Bhurjikhan's voice. This was all due to the kind mercy of Shahu. Khansahib held Bhurjikhan by heart and began his lessons again. Bhurjikhan later continued with his vocal service in the temple until the end.[21] The appointment of Bhurjikhan in the temple of Mahalaxmi was not just an experiment in the field of art but a conscious step taken by Shahu in the social sphere with a view to increasing Hindu-Muslim amity.

IDEAL TRADITION OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

In the field of art, caste and religion do not matter. A true artist believes in the principle that art itself is the caste and worship of art is the religion and he behaves accordingly. This was the creed of the artists mentioned above who were under Shahu's royal patronage. They regarded themselves as artists and the masses accepted them as artists with affection and honoured them irrespective of their religion. Actually, they and their Muslim community had become part of the non-Brahmin masses of Kolhapur. Such mutual affection between the two communities was exceptional elsewhere in India. In Bombay Presidency, at places like Bombay and Poona, agitations for ban on cow slaughter and occasions like Ganesh festival usually created tensions between the two communities that often culminated into riots. On this backdrop, in the State of Kolhapur where the law banning cow slaughter was enforced,[22] not

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even a murmur of tension was heard leave alone the riots. In the Muslim festival of *Moharram*, Hindus participated enthusiastically in large numbers. Whenever Ganesh festival and Moharram occasioned simultaneously, the wrestling clubs of Kolhapur (the *Talims)* installed the Ganesh idols and Moharram *panjas** were also installed at the same venue. Even today this glorious traditions is being followed in Kolhapur. Shahu created the tradition of Hindu-Muslim unity and the people of Kolhapur have proudly continued to observe these. It was because of these traditions that after independence, when flames of Hindu - Muslim riots were erupting all over the country Kolhapur remained unscathed closely guarding its ideal of Hindu-Muslim harmony. In this context, one incident that occurred a few years ago in Kolhapur should be mentioned. Some fundamentalists defiled the statue of Alladiya Khansahib erected in front of Deval club. The art loving citizenry of Kolhapur was infuriated on hearing the news. It not only condemned the fanatic act but also restored the statue of the Khansahib and proved once again that the tradition of Hindu-Muslim unity laid down by the Rajarshi is still alive long after his death. This was a victory of Shahu's secular ideals and love for art! Even today, whenever riotous tensions between Hindus and Muslims occur in the country or Maharashtra, the people of Kolhapur remain peaceful to respect Shahu's tradition. It is a matter of honour not only for Kolhapur, but for entire Maharashtra.

JAINS, LINGAYATS, AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Jains and Lingayats were the other important communities in Kolhapur besides Muslims. Shahu Maharaja had catered to the religious requirements of both these communities by granting lands for their monasteries and temples.[23] The Jain community in the State would ceremoniously celebrate the *Nirvana* of the Ninth Tirthankar Pushpadant Swami. In the year 1921, this community requested Shahu to declare that day a public holiday. It was approved. The other request of the Jains was to ban slaughter of animals on that day. On this request Shahu ordered, "As all subjects are equal, no law can be passed banning anybody's foodstuff. However if the Jains try and convert the people of all castes and religions to their cause and if the subjects considering the desire of the Jains refrain from violence as far as possible, His Highness would be pleased."[24]

Two important references are available regarding the Lingayats. The first is the important ruling delivered by Shahu whereby he ordered that the Lingayat community does not belong to the Shudra class while he sat in judgment on a matter of a patil *watan*. Shahu overruled the earlier decision the previous high court had given on the basis of the opinion of Brahmin scholars that Lingayat community was a Shudra community.[25] The second reference relates to the *Swami* (monk) of the Chitradurga monastery of the Lingayats in Mysore State. The Swami was regarded Jagadguru (universal head) of the Lingayat community and like the Jagadguru Shankaracharaya of the Shringeri monastery he too had customary right to the enjoyment of insignia such as *Addapalkhi, panchkalash, Shwetchhatri* etc. The Swami was a renowned scholar of Sanskrit and was striving for the spread of education among the backward communities. Shahu felt empathy for him. In 1913, he met with Shahu and told him

* The iron hand of Muslims, representing their five holy personage.

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that the Maharaja of Mysore had prohibited him from using the insignia out of some misunderstanding. Shahu appears to have written a special personal letter to the Diwan of Mysore, Sir Visveshwaraya, requesting him to communicate to the Maharaja of Mysore to rectify the injustice.[26]

We have earlier discussed the royal patronage accorded by Shahu to the organizations such as Arya Samaj and Satyashodhak Samaj engaged in social and religious movements in the State of Kolhapur. For some time, Shahu was attracted by the Theosophical Society as well. However, the theosophical philosophy could not completely satisfy him. Though he had allotted place to the Society in Kolhapur he did not get closely involved. Perhaps the active participation in national politics of the activists of the Society, especially the pioneer Dr. Annie Besant, might have been the obstacle in increasing such contact and therefore the Kolhapur Darbar appears to have put certain conditions while granting land to the Society. Amongst these, 'The Theosophical society should always remain loyal to the Darbar and the British Government' was a major condition. The Darbar expected the Society only to spread its philosophy and restrain from political activities in the territory of Kolhapur State. However along with the grant of land the Darbar also had donated a handsome amount of Rs. 3,000 to the Society to facilitate activities such as the spread of education, construction of library etc.[27]

PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS THINKING

It would not be out of place to say that religious curiosity was a significant feature of Shahu's character. In this regard, he can be compared with the great Mughal Emperor Akbar of medieval India. The religious curiosity of Akbar was so strong that he extended patronage to scholars of all major religions of the world in his court and discussed with them religious philosophy. He selected the constructive principles of every religion and founded his own religious sect called' Din Ilahi'. Akbar's sect did not win much following and with the end of his reign it too went into oblivion. Even then its significance as a novel religio-cultural experiment of a mighty emperor in the history of India still remains. Shahu too made friends with many religions, sects, and organizations for religious reforms out of his religious curiosity and accorded royal patronage to them. He acquainted himself with their philosophies. Indeed, Shahu had a profound attraction and curiosity for the institution of religion. He yearned to reform his own religion and infuse in it the principle of equality. It was with this yearning that he conducted novel experiments such as Vedic School and *Kshatrjagadguru* in the domain of religion. He had in his mind some original fundamental ideas about the institution of religion. His teacher Sir Fraser has said that Shahu had explored the possibility of founding a new religion just as Emperor Akbar did.[28] On the evidence of Sir Fraser we can have some idea as to the direction in which Shahu was thinking on the issue of religion. Obviously, these ideas did not go afar. The reason is he might not have felt that much could be achieved by founding a new religion and that this would only add one more to the plethora of the existing religions of the world. Like Akbar's Din Ilahi his religion too would vanish after him. As a result, instead of going for a new religion he decided to patronize the existing

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reformist religious sects such as the Arya Samaj, Satyashodhak Samaj and Theosophical Society and espouse their good principles to reform the society.

Shahu had publicly applauded the Arya Samaj and noted with appreciation that the Samaj not only embraced all castes-subcastes, sects and creeds in India but also those who did not belong to the Aryan race, on the principle of equality and conferred on them all Aryan rights of food and marriage. He had expressed his expectation that the Samaj instead of limiting itself to India should adopt a global outlook. We have already seen him voice that the Arya Samaj should show readiness to assimilate the people of the European and American continents for they also belonged to the Aryan race. In ancient times their ancestors lived together with the ancestors of the Aryans in India and so all were of the same stock. Shahu adds, "....There is a vast difference between our and Western Aryans' lifestyles and thoughts for we have been isolated for a long time. However, some of our fundamental aspects are similar. They do not observe caste discrimination. Even our true religion does not accept it. Only the fake Brahiminical religion assigns importance to the touch taboos and adds to caste jealousies; but the Aryan religion is basically assimilative. It is going to help the union of different castes, creeds, and religions."[29]

Shahu, however, was not insistent that the Aryans from the European and American continents accept the Aryan religion of India. Rather he maintained that if people of different sects or religions dwelt in harmony and peace like in a family, the Arya Samaj, as it granted freedom of deeds and thoughts to all, should approve to such ideal family system of religions. He says, "As the principle of equality is in vogue in Europe, America, and Japan, brothers and married couples professing different religions are found in the same family. In the same way, the existence of a happy family with an Arya Samajist husband and wife belonging to some other religion or wife Arya Samajist and husband following another creed is not impossible. The brothers in the family could follow different religions. Everyone should have freedom of deeds and thought."[30]

About this time (c. 1918) the idea of major nations jointly forming a 'League of Nations' to ensure international peace and order was being deliberated. Shahu had advanced the idea that in similar manner, all the religions of the world should come together and form a society of religions and Arya Samaj should take initiative towards such establishment. These thoughts of Shahu were a valuable guidance to the Arya Samaj for its future course in the national and international arena. The chief religious text of the Arya Samaj, known as *Satyarthprakash,* is a harsh and aggressive critic of religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity. Shahu's ideas, however, could have made the Samaj more assimilative, more equality oriented, more liberal and more tolerant.

This was how the religious ideas of Shahu appeared to have evolved. A staunch conventionalist to begin with, he was attracted towards the Arya Samaj after the *Vedokta* episode and became a die-hard proponent of the Vedic religion. But the above thoughts make it clear that he transcended this stage as well. While maintaining that religion was a personal matter and ought to be kept aside if it crossed the interests of the nation, he says, "We are all Hindi (Indians). We are all

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brothers. Indian people are all Hindi irrespective of their color, class or religion. Religion might be important for an individual but it should never impede the interests of the nation. In this context, I feel religion is a far less important thing. After all, what is 'religion' He answers, " ....In short, the term religion can be defined as a path to God. Paths from all over come and meet in big cities such as London, Bombay, Calcutta etc. People from all over aim to reach these cities in the shortest of time and with the least effort. In the same way, the aim of different religions that have come into existence in different countries under different circumstances is the same. As such when there is no reason for people following different paths to reach the same city to hate each other, why should people following different paths to reach the same God hate each other? Whatever might be the circumstances when these religions were formed, today at least no one is seen to have reached God professing a particular religion and no one has the right to be boastful of his religion as the only religion and call other religions as sham."

And finally, Shahu reaches the ultimate stage of his religious thinking that true religion lay in the service of the compatriots, philanthropy, and discovering God in man. He has said, "Compassion is the root of religion, vanity the door to hell. According to this dictum the service of the country viz. the countrymen and the searching and discovering God in man is the true religion. This is the opinion of all religions. All religions preach that charity is a virtue and sadism is a sin. Looking from this angle it is utterly wrong to be jealous of each other under the pretext of religion."[31] These days, when religion has assumed more importance than politics and society in many a part of the world and our nation is facing the greatest danger from religious fanatists, it is no wonder if we find the religious thoughts of Shahu as more valuable and inspiring.

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27.

LABOUR MOVEMENT

In the wake of the 19th century industrial revolution in Europe a powerful capitalist class emerged along with the numerically larger working class. During this very period, the philosophy of class struggle also came into existence. In countries such as England, France etc. political struggles were launched for welfare of workers. As a result, in Europe labour came to the fore as a political force.

RISE OF WORKING CLASS IN INDIA

The participation of the labour class in the government increased. The industrial revolution had made its appearance in India too. Factories and textile mills were established in cities like Bombay and Calcutta and a class of labour working on daily wages had come into existence in these cities. The textile industry was on the rise in Bombay. These mills were owned by the British, Parsis, Bhatia, Khoja capitalists; the workers labouring in their mills were Maharashtrians of agricultural class who had come from virtually every nook and corner of the interiors of Maharashtra. The mill owners of Bombay also possessed all the characteristics of the capitalist class and did not fall short in brutal exploitation of the workers. In other words, they appeared to be the brothers of the European capitalists. However, there was no comparison between the Indian labour class and its European counterpart. For, the Indian workers' class unlike the European labour had not yet become politically and socially aware and organized.

Shahu was well aware of the international circumstances, especially the struggle of the European labour. He knew about the rights the workers of Europe had wrested. He felt that the workers in India would get nothing unless they organized and fought for their rights like the workers of Europe. The labour class was an inseparable part of the common lay folk whose deliverance he had undertaken as a mission. As such, he had become aware that it was improper to run the movement for betterment of the masses excluding the labour class.

Fortunately, two addresses of Shahu delivered at the gathering of the workers of

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Bombay are available to scholars. They reveal his genuine concern for the interests of the labour class and his observations on their conditions. These speeches were delivered in November 1918 viz. around the end of the First World War. During this period, great events of enormous consequences had taken place on the international scene. In European countries of Russia, Germany the absolute monarchies had come to an end and the political power of the workers had come to the fore. Especially in Russia the workers' class under the leadership of Lenin had instrumented a Communist Revolution and begun the experiment of government by the labour. Out of the fear of this Communist revolution, the capitalist countries like England had started appeasement of its workers. Already, the representatives of the labour class had entered legislatures and exhibited their strength. It should be noted that Shahu has guided workers on this background taking into account these international events.

"WORKERS OF INDIA, UNITE"

Earlier leaders such as Rao Bahadur Narayan Meghaji Lokhande had tried to organize the labour class of Bombay. Around this period, labour leaders such as C.K.Bole, Vandekar, Talchelkar were active in the labour movement. On 10th November 1918, these men arranged a public meeting of about 10,000 workers and other downtrodden people in the Parel suburb of Bombay and requested Shahu to preside over it. Shahu honoured the request. The people belonging to the poor working class were overwhelmed with joy to find that the Chhatrapati Maharaja would attend the meeting in person. Shahu began his address with these words, "I am a part of you and so I am particularly pleased to preside over this meeting..." No wonder he won the hearts of the assembled workers.

Shahu went straight to the point by taking up the issue of condition of the workers. He said, "In Western countries there are two classes namely the capitalists and the labour. There too, the capitalists used to exercise unrestrained power over the workers. But now the workers have formed their unions. A straw of grass is worthless per se; however, a rope formed out of uniting many such straws is strong enough to cage even an elephant. The workers in the Western countries have to fight over the only issue of raise in wages. In those societies there are no caste impediments in reaching any grade or rank. As such, workers can easily intermingle with the higher classes. We do not have such conditions here. In foreign countries, the unions of workers have acquired great importance. Their representatives have entered institutions like the parliament and cabinet and are taking due care of the interests of their class."[1]

Shahu appealed to the workers of India to unite following the example of its European counterpart and acquire strength enough to bring the mighty capitalist to terms with them. His allusion to influence of workers' representative in the parliament and cabinet was suggestive. Shahu wanted to suggest that the representatives of the workers should exert strong influence in the constitutional democracy of India in future and to achieve this objective the workers should be alert and start their endeavour immediately. He felt that the rise of the labour power in international politics was indicative of the democratic governments all over the world

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succumbing to influence of the labour class and the impending democracy in India could not remain aloof from this influence.

While propounding this view in another workers gathering just two weeks after this meeting, he says, "I have already mentioned that in countries of the West the parties of the capitalists and the workers are engaged in brawls. As a result of the (World) War, the governance has devolved upon the labour parties in most cases. Russia and Germany were the two seats of absolute monarchial power. These are being replaced by republics under the leadership of the labour parties. In England too the influence of the labour party is increasing gradually. Neutral countries such as Holland too are sure to be affected by this wave. Adult franchise in essence means that the governance would be conducted in accordance with the aspirations of the common people. The power of the minority would be reduced. This is inevitable. We too should strive for such rights. For that we have to endeavour tenaciously and selflessly."[2] Commenting on this statement, Communist thinker Com. Prabhakar Vaidya has said, "Shahu, speaking about Russia and Germany and making a welcome statement about the overthrow of the tyrannical rule of the Czar and the Kaiser by the proletariat is immensely significant. It is especially commendable that such a statement is made by a crowned king of a Princely State."[3]

Shahu said that the penchant of European capitalism of exploiting the labour class to the maximum has permeated the mills and factories of India making miserable the condition of the already poor workers. To ameliorate this condition it is essential that the workers make strong and selfless efforts unitedly.[4] To that effect he advised the labour class to build an organization to ensure their betterment and follow the mantra of self-reliance. He says, "In England the workers formed into unions and followed the path of self-reliance for their upliftment. Likewise, we too should form well-organized unions. We should improve ourselves by educating our children and make efforts to ensure good health. Always bear in mind that expecting someone else to strive for our betterment is unequivocally degrading. The peril our religion faced from a foreign religion was done away with by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja with the help of his own people."[5] He thus cited the example of Shivaji the Great from history to illustrate how self-reliance leads to self deliverance. On one occasion he said that the workers should make 'unity, mutual love, trust and incessant efforts' the weapons of their struggle towards development while co-operation the means of their progress. The 'ignorant' and 'uneducated' worker learns to work methodically in co-peration. Therefore, workers should establish cooperative credit societies in every factory as 'primary schools of co-operation.'[6]

In the first workers' meeting Shahu had appealed, that they should take the initiative and establish labour unions. As a result, C.K.Bole and his associates established an organization of workers called 'People's Union' in Bombay. The second workers meet of Shahu was arranged by this organization. In expressing his pleasure over the formation of workers' union Shahu said, "There are two strong parties in England namely the capitalist and the labour. Until today, it was supposed that their interests are opposed to each other. Actually, if every one looks

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after his just rights and refrains from opposing the just rights of others, there would not be any room for bickering. The day when the higher classes acknowledge this fact and the suppressed get a chance to come to the fore, would be an auspicious day! I hope this day would come soon."[7]

Here it will be pertinent to examine two more opinions Shahu expressed about the labour class. He said that in India, the foremost backward class was of the agriculturists, the labour class was not different from the class of peasants. As the labour working in the factories was agriculturist in his origin, the interests of these two classes should be taken into account as a whole.[8] Shahu's next observation is related to the flow of people from rural to urban areas in search of livelihood. The farmer from a village takes to cities and becomes a factory worker, as he is unable to feed himself out of the produce of his land. Shahu felt that this state of affairs was not only not creditable to the development of the country but also harmful in various other aspects. He says, the occupation of farming in the village ought to become more lucrative. It should provide employment to maximum people in villages and only those who would be bereft of employment after such provision should go to the urban centers. If this happens, it would not only lead to the development of villages, but also eliminate the possibility of imbalance and ill health of the urban centers.[9]

The thinking of Shahu is amazingly modern and of fundamental importance. Times have changed and perhaps today we might not find much novelty in these musings. However, if we think of the conditions of Shahu's era, it becomes clear that his thoughts were far ahead of his times. In those days, the labour unions in not only Maharashtra but all over the country were yet to take firm roots. The first all India workers organization was established (ITUC) in 1920 and the great Congress leader Lala Lajpat Rai was elected as its first president. The Communist Party of India was established in 1925 and around this very period Com. Dange and Com. Mirajkar came into prominence as labour leaders. When we take into account that Shahu had expressed these thoughts before these events, their originality and revolutionary character becomes clear. Especially he was the first and the exceptional Princely leader of India who explained the workers the meaning of class conflict and advised them to unite. A vassal prince of the British imperial power, giving the workers of India a dream of a future democracy of the workers with references to the workers' revolutions in Russia and Germany, was by itself an event unprecedented in the history of India.

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28.

AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND CO-OPERATION

Today Kolhapur is a leading district in Maharashtra in agricultural enterprise, industry and cooperation. It is not that the process of its development began after independence. Its foundations were laid in the pre-independence era during the reign of Shahu . In those days, the green revolution that started in the State of Kolhapur was the first such phenomenon in Maharashtra. It was the fruition of Shahu's foresight and his progressive welfare policies. The majority of the population of the Kolhapur State was of the agriculturists. The farmers of State, as elsewhere in the country, had been rotting in the murk of ignorance and poverty. They were socially backward because of ignorance while materially backward on account of poverty. The misery of these people would reach darker depths whenever a natural calamity struck - a famine or plague.

MASS IRRIGATION POLICY

Shahu had the bitter experience of watching his subjects suffer from these disasters in the very first phase of his reign soon after his coronation. He performed his duties meticulously trying to save his subjects and their cattle from death by providing them with grains and fodder. However, he was not content. He decided to implement fundamental measures to get rid of the calamity of famine permanently and in 1902, he declared the unprecedented 'Mass Irrigation Policy' for his State. Soon a separate irrigation department was established and an irrigation officer appointed. This department surveyed each and every village in the State in detail from the irrigation point of view. New and old wells, small and large lakes, tiny and big bunds were enlisted and their reconstruction was undertaken. The schemes of new wells, new lakes and tiny bunds began to be implemented in right earnest.[1] Efforts were made to restrict and store every stream of rainwater and finally Shahu came up with a gem of a project that took the place of pride among all other schemes. It was the project of an ambitious dam to contain the passage of the river Bhogawati in the mountain ranges of Sahyadri to the west of Kolhapur. This dam proved to be the lifeline of the Kolhapur State.

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RADHANAGRI DAM

During his Europe trip in 1902, Shahu had observed economic and social conditions that prevailed in Europe. He was impressed with the imaginative way the Europeans had utilized every available natural resource towards their material improvement. Why should not it happen in India? Why should not we follow the European example? Shahu was overwhelmed with these thoughts.[2] The peaks of Sahyadri mountain received hundreds of inches of rainfall and the rivers that originated there overflow in the rainy season and drained all their water wealth in the ocean. Soon after the monsoon the rivers dried. If the rainwater that fell in the Sahyadri ranges was blocked and fed to the thirsty black soil of the Deccan plateau, should not the land become green and prosperous in the true sense of the term? Why not build a huge dam on some river to counter the recurrent problem of famine? There is nothing impossible if one has a strong will! The roots of Shahu's dream of the Radhanagri dam lay in such thoughts.

It was not an ordinary dream. It was like the legendary *Shivdhanushya.** A small State such as Kolhapur taking on a project like the Radhanagri dam was as impossible a task as a small district of today taking on the project of building the Koyna dam (the biggest dam in Maharashtra today). And indeed Shahu's project would be the biggest dam of India of those days! To undertake such massive project the king needed to have a heart of a lion. Shahu did possess that courage and a strong iron will. It was backed by the desire of public welfare. Shahu looked at this project as the most imporatant task of his life. In a letter to a friend he had said, "My life's work will have been done when I complete this project!" To realize his dream Shahu had mustered all power and resources at his command. In a letter to a British official, Col. Ferris who had retired to England from Kolhapur, he says, "Since you left us I built about 20 tanks. But I was not satisfied. So I have taken up now a big irrigation scheme and the tank would be the biggest in India. I spend all my energy on it. Now Bapusaheb and myself are working on the site. I only wish that it may prove a success."[3]

The history of the Radhanagri dam is the history of the enormous efforts and energy Shahu put in the making of this dam; a monument to his foresight, his tenacity, yearning, and the many incidents of hope and despair that occurred during the construction. The actual construction of the dam began in the year 1909. By 1918, the height of the dam had risen to 40 feet costing Rs. 18 lakhs. Later, though the construction halted for a while for want of money, the 600 million cubic feet water stored in the dam was available for agriculture every year. This water would be streamed into the river as per the requirement. As a result, both the banks of the river Bhogavati (the same river later becomes Panchganga) turned lush green throughout the year. Shahu's dream of green revolution came true though partially. (The construction of this dam continued over a long period. It was finally completed in the year 1957).

AGRICULTURAL VENTURES

After independence, the Government of India adopted the policy of modernization in the fields of agriculture and industry and undertook various projects on scientific basis. In the State of Kolhapur Shahu had

* The legendary bow of Lord Shiva which was supposed very difficult to break.

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started the process of modernization way back during his reign. He had personally seen that in Europe agriculture production was many folds more than in India, thanks to scientific farming. In order to spread the knowledge of modern farming among the farmers of his state he undertook various projects. To disseminate the knowledge of advanced farming he established King Edward Agricultural Institute in Kolhapur in 1912. A museum of modern farm equipments was set up as its adjunct. Special agricultural officers were appointed to provide the farmers the knowledge and training of modern farm equipments, seeds, chemical fertilizers, and modern methods of cultivation. To inculcate the habit of modern farming among the farmers , agricultural exhibitions were organized during festive occasions of the Mahalaxmi *Rathotsav* and Jotiba fair. In these exhibitions modern farm equipments, samples of high quality grains, informative pamphlets were displayed. Close by, cattle of quality breed would also be exhibited. At times along with this agricultural exhibition, science fair would also be arranged. Shahu wanted his people to develop a liking for modern science. To attract the people especially the farmers ,to such exhibitions entertainment items, wrestling competitions, manly sports, elephant fights would be arranged simultaneously.[4]

Experimentation is an important part of modernism. The experimentation that Shahu displayed in the field of agriculture was worth appreciating. Traditional crops like sugarcane, rice, jowar, groundnuts, and pulses were the normal produce in the state. However, Shahu thought that if crops hitherto never produced such as tea, coffee, rubber, cardamom, coco etc. were planted, it would lead to transformation of agriculture in the state. Therefore, he created tea, coffee, rubber plantations on the slopes of the Western Ghats of Sahyadri ranges that received abundant rainfall. Out of these, the experiment of tea plantation was successful beyond expectations. High quality tea began to be produced in Kolhapur State. Soon it began to be produced on commercial basis and transported under the brand name of 'Panhala, Tea No. Four' outside the state, especially to the Princes of India. It became the favorite brand of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda. He began to feel that he too should experiment with the production of tea in his state.[5] Sadly, after Shahu no one took the business of tea plantation seriously. Unfortunately, the Panhala tea of Kolhapur became history over a period of time.

ACTIVE SUPPORT TO COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Agriculture and industry are supposed to be the two important wheels of material advancement of a society during every phase of human history. Shahu was aware of this fact that the European society was at the vanguard on both these fronts. He thought that India's sluggishness, especially in the field of commerce and industry, had led to our brutal economic exploitation making our dependence more miserable. He felt that the people, especially the Maharashtrians, should take to industry and commerce and contribute to the development of the nation along with their own progress. In his presidential address at the All India Maratha Education Conference held at Khamgaon in 1917, he says, ".....It is no matter of satisfaction that we should always be either farmers or soldiers. It is essential for us to enter commerce, industry and other high profile occupations. These days we never enter commence or industry. The development

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of the nation in the twentieth century depends on commerce and related activities. Actually, commerce has become the religion of the Western countries. Here what I mean by religion is intelligent self-interest. If we do not dare to venture into trade and commerce, all our undertakings would be lackluster and futile. As I believe in commerce, I have put my two sons and relatives in trade and I am pleased to inform that they have happily accepted their business. What's more, they are showing signs of prosperity."[6]

At the beginning of Shahu's reign, the condition of trade and commerce in Kolhapur State was not quite satisfactory. There was no market place as such in the State. High quality jaggery produced in the State was sent down the Western Ghats to the market at Rajapur in Konkan and from there it would proceed to Mumbai and other places. Jaggery produced in Kolhapur had become famous as 'Rajapuri' Jaggery! Shahu decided to change this state of affairs. A year after his coronation establishment of a market called Shahupuri was undertaken on a piece of land adjacent to the railway station. The merchant communities of Kolhapur, Kagal, Nipani were accorded special concessions and encouraged to set up establishments in Kolhapur. The new market flourished with vigour just within half a decade. Merchant community grew in numbers and economic transactions increased. The agricultural produce of the state was assured a market in the state itself. The market flourished until the year 1902. Transactions worth lakhs of rupees became a routine affair. Shahu himself has informed in one of his letters that every year jaggery worth Rs. 50 lakhs and groundnuts worth Rs.20 lakhs were exported.[7] Even today Kolhapur is regarded as the biggest market of jaggery in the country.

One more market was set up near the Shirol Railway station in 1917. Shahu named this new market as Jaisingpur in the memory of his biological father Jaisingrao Ghatge.[8] Shahu had established a colony after the name of his only daughter Radhabai alias Akkasaheb, called Radhanagri, to the west of Kolhapur at the feet of the dam on river Bhogawati. Shahu appears to have strived hard to make this colony a market for the people living in the nearby mountainous and backward areas. Shahu provided credit from the treasury to encourage merchants to go and trade in Radhanagri.[9] He appears to have taken special efforts to encourage trade and commerce in other areas as well. For example, the town of Raibaug was situated on the border areas of Kolhapur State. It was earlier renowned for the art of cloth weaving. However, the Muslim and Lingayat weavers of the town had left the place as a fall out of their mutual bickering. When Shahu came to know of this, he brought them back to Raibaug. He set up weavers associations for them. He provided Rs. 3,000 free of interest for five years as seed capital to these associations. Furthermore, to the 40 families that had come to engage in this activity and settle, he provided open space for residence and allotted donations of Rs.150 each to begin their vocation.[10] After receiving such handsome economic assistance from Darbar it was no wonder that the weaving activity soon began to flourish. Soon Raibaug became renowned in Maharashtra for its clothes such as *Dhoti** garments, saris, and *Cholkhan.***

* Male waist garment.

** Cloth for women's breast coat.

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EXPERIMENTATION IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

Shahu had made an industrial survey in his State with a view of setting up various industries in the same way he had surveyed the water resources for irrigation projects. On the basis of this survey, he himself imaginatively started various new industries and also encouraged a few others to enter the field. Accordingly, by 1905 in Kolhapur Essential Oil Industry, Bee-Keeping Industry, Wood Distillation Industry, and Cotton Textile Industry were started in Kolhapur State. Shahu either sent people from the State to different parts of the country to train in these trades or appointed trained personnel from outside the State on key positions. He wanted the people of his State to be trained under the foreign officers. Today thousands of such industries are set up and making progress in our country. Various types of thousands of modern factories are contributing to the industrial production of the country. So, if we look at the industrial policy of Shahu today standing amidst the modern achievements, it might not appear extraordinary. However, taking into account the circumstances that prevailed a century ago when a few industries worth the name had begun sporadically and only in metros like Bombay and Calcutta, and when in other areas, Princely as well as British, industry was an exception, the industries that Shahu had started in his state a century ago become projects of extraordinary significance in the industrial history of India. It should be noted that the experimentalism he had displayed in starting these industries had astonished many people of those times also. A few examples of would make clear the legitimacy of this statement.

In 1904, Shahu had appointed D.S.Shaligram, a chemical expert trained in Japan as the industrial inspector in the State. He had planned to start some new industries based on forest products. Accordingly, Shaligram had begun the production in the areas of Essential Oil Industry and Wood Distillation on experimental basis successfully. The samples of three essential oils produced in Kolhapur State were sent to the industrial exhibition held at Mumbai. Experts appreciated all the three oils and the State was awarded a silver medal. The administrative report of 1904-1905 of Kolhapur State maintains that the experts, while praising the oil production had remarked in the official guide book as follows: "The industry of essential oils in the State (Kolhapur) is quite a new departure and one not yet taken up by any other native state."[11] There were hundreds of Princely States small and big in India of those times. But no Prince had shown such spirit of experimentation in the oil industry. Naturally, the experts could not refrain from appreciating this effort.

Kolhapur had achieved commendable success in wood-distillation industry as well. Products such as *lonari* coal of a particular kind, vinegar, and coal tar were successfully manufactured by distilling the wood of typical plants found in the forests of Sahyadri. The samples were sent for experts' examination not only to the Chambers of Commerce of Bombay and Calcutta but also to the laboratories of America and Japan- (1905-06). As these distilled oils were required in large quantities in the production of various paints, its production on a commercial basis would prove lucrative.[12] The experiments of wood distillation continued later for many more years. Some samples were

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exhibited in the industrial exhibition at Mysore. There too the scientific quality of these oils was appreciated by experts and Kolhapur State was awarded silver medal for their production (1919).[13]

Bee-keeping industry was another novel experiment. It was an example of Shahu's imaginativeness, experimentalism, and foresight. The forest areas in the Sahyadri ranges to the west of the State would always be lush green with fruits and flowers throughout the year. Shahu thought that on this background of natural resources, if the industry of bee keeping was started, it would definitely flourish and come handy as an auxiliary industry to the farmers of the State. When struck with the idea he began to lookout for scientific know-how for this industry. Bee-keeping was practised nowhere in the Bombay Presidency. Therefore, the Maharaja sent his officer named Chitnis to the Director of Agriculture at Calcutta. It did not help. They did not have the expertise. Soon Shahu realized that nowhere in India bee-keeping is practised as an industry on commercial basis nor was there any facility to provide training or practical knowledge. The correspondence between Shahu and his British friend in Mumbai McNeil is interesting. McNeil writes to Shahu, "Mr. D.H.Chitnis has just wired to me from Calcutta that he has seen the Director of Agriculture Mr. Watt, but can get no practical information. The amateur bee-keeper Douglas of the Telegraph Department and the agents are dead. I don't think that Mr. Chitnis can do any good by remaining there. He will do at least as much by reading up the best textbooks and doing what he can with the bees in Kolhapur. He will probably make mistakes but if he uses a good protective bee dress he will acquire confidence and knowledge should follow."[14]

In his reply to McNeil Shahu writes, "We have tried our best here to bring up the bees. I am quite sure that with a little more practical knowledge we should have succeeded and it was with that view that I sent Chitnis to see how the thing is actually worked. But it seems there is not a single place in India where this industry is taken up seriously. Now I have asked him to see the editor of 'Indian Agriculturist' and if he fails to get information even in that quarter then we must fend for ourselves as advised by you" (March 1903).[15] Even though the practical knowledge about bee keeping could not be had, Shahu tenaciously started this industry in the State without loosing heart and made Kolhapur the pioneer in this area!

SHAHU CHHATRAPATI MILLS

In the field of industry, the largest project that was undertaken in the State of Kolhapur was of a textile mill. Encouraged and patronized by Shahu 'The Shahu Chahtrapati Spinning and Weaving Mills' was set up in 1906. Shahu gave a large piece of land, adjacent lake of water and a capital of Rs. 50,000 for the setting up the mill. It provided employment to hundreds of people in Kolhapur. Moreover, Kolhapur became a prominent entity on the textile map of India. Shahu inaugurated the mill on the auspicious occasion of *Vijayadashami* on September 27, 1906. Shahu narrated how he was impressed by the progress of the Europeans in the art of industry and commerce during his European tour and how restless he had been with the thought as to how the European example could be followed in his State.

Expressing his happiness that the aristocrats and the wealthy elements had taken initiative in setting up the mill, Shahu

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added, "Personally I am opposed to the energies of the already overworked machinery of the state being diverted to objects alien to its proper function and my aim has been and will be to develop the industries brought about by the co-operation of the people themselves....."Promising his complete cooperation and assistance to make the project a success he further said that the people of Kolhapur should be vigilant that in no circumstances this industry should end in the hands of big mill owners or rich capitalists and should achieve such success in this industry that the world should understand that: Mercantile talents are not a monopoly of Bombay alone! Traditionally, on *Vijayadashmi* day the Marathas would embark on campaigns to conquer new lands. Elaborating the significance of this day in modern times, Shahu finally said, "On this day the frontier was crossed and victory achieved. The custom is still preserved and now if the boundaries are not crossed in pursuit of material fame, let us make our minds to cross them in search of honorable glory of industrial development. We must remember, 'Please have your victories more renowned than war.' Victory in these days has to be gained over apathy, ignorance and poverty. Let us fight with etermination against those evils. That success may crown all your efforts is my cordial wish!"[16]

Apart from this mill, many ginning factories had been founded at places such as Shirol,Ichalkaranji, and Gadhinglaj in the State. Around 1912-13 various undertakings such as the first oil mill, first saw mill, first foundry, first electric company, first motor transport company had begun functioning in the State.[17] Rajaram Industrial School was set up in order to provide trained workers for different industries. The facility of providing short term loans to traders and entrepreneurs in the State was started by the government.[18] Instances of Shahu's assistance to entrepreneurs outside the State are also available. Prominent among the beneficiaries were Vishwanath Salvekar of Mumbai, the owner of Sardargriha and Laxmanrao Kirloskar, founder of Kirloskar Industries.[19]

SHAHU - PIONEER OF CO-OPERATION

While accelerating the development of commerce and industry within and without his State Shahu had championed the principle of co-operation in this field. This was unprecedented as far as a Prince of those times was concerned. That Shahu was one of the foremost proponents of co-operation in this country was unequivocally a matter of pride for Maharashtra. We have already seen that during the inauguration ceremony of the textile mill at Kolhapur in 1906 Shahu had said that instead of depending on state machinery to start new ventures people should step forward and start industries on co-operative basis. Earlier we have also noted the advice about starting co-operative credit societies in every chawl and factory that he gave in the public meeting of workers in 1918 in Mumbai. Later in 1920, the Rajaram Industrial School arranged an agricultural industrial exhibition wherein the modern equipments related to these fields were displayed. Along with this association, the Arya Kshatriya Comunity of Kolhapur (Jingar community) had arranged its conference. This community was supposed to be the master in the production of handicraft materials. Shahu had encouraged skilled artisans from this community to start

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various businesses.

The credit of starting the first foundry in Kolhapur goes to Datto Babaji Karajgar, a skilled artisan from this very community (1913). Karajgar was the master blacksmith in the industrial school. Shahu had devolved upon him the manufacture of an iron machine to crush sugarcane and an equipment to facilitate the installation of two draw-well buckets on a single bull.[20] Applauding him in the conference of such skilled people Shahu said, "The skill of your caste at handicraft is well known. Whenever such skill is required, I invariably remember the artisans among you. I announce with pleasure that many equipments I use everyday are the handiwork of your artisans. I am proud that such skilled men are part of my subjects. Your exhibition of handicraft is illuminating. You have shown clearly what you are capable of. It will show our patriots the things that can be manufactured here if we have to follow the observance of *Swadeshi* truly. The Western countries have already proved how essential such exhibitions are in encouraging the skills and artistry in the country. They always organize a national exhibition on the occasion of every festival or ceremony. The exhibition of yours is a matter of pride to your people and would be edifying to the budding artists. Also the customer would be benefited in that he would learn where he will get the desired equipment. It is a well-acknowledged principle that the progress of a nation depends on the growth of commerce and industry. I am very much interested in the growth of industry and you very well know my efforts in that direction."[21]

Earlier these Jingar people nurtured their craft under the patronage of kings and aristocrats. However, the times had now changed. The age of modernity had ushered in and the structure of the society was undergoing transformation. Shahu had no doubt that the commoners were sure to awaken politically and socially and would hold political power in the future. He had counseled the artisans that on the backdrop of the changes that were taking place they should take to co-operation- the mantra of the modern era-in order to preserve their traditional professions. He says, "As the political power is accruing to the commoners in this modern era, our old method would be of no use. These days, public patronage is more beneficial than royal patronage. Also the days of individual labour have gone. Now many people should come together with their skills, brains, money, and labour. In essence, they should co-operate. Earlier at the most, a family would work at a place. The profit that would accrue sufficed for the family members. Now we should expand the definition of family. 10/20/50 families should come together for a new business. They should get remuneration according to their abilities. The profit that would accrue should also be distributed. Therefore, learn co-operation. Start your own co-operative credit society."[22]

To give a legal character to the principle of co-operation Shahu passed the Co-operative Societies Act in his State in 1912. A registrar was appointed for legal registration of cooperative societies. The very next year the first co-operative institution namely 'The Kolhapur Urban Co-operative Society Limited' was launched under the leadership of Bhaskarrao Jadhav. By the year 1921, the number of co-operative societies in the State reached 37.[23] The co-operative movement in the State began to progress not only

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quantitatively but also qualitatively by the day.

Today the district of Kolhapur is on the forefront in green as well as white revolution, thanks to various industries and businesses run on a co-operative basis. A network of various co-operative societies has been formed in rural areas throughout the district. It includes various executive co-operative societies that provide economic assistance and farm equipments for agriculture, co-operative drift irrigation societies to provide water for irrigation, co-operative milk societies to collect thousands of litres of milk from farmers, rural credit societies to inculcate a habit of savings among farmers and provide them with loans in times of distress. What is remarkable is that all these societies have become self-reliant on the strength of their own capital. The main financial institution in the district namely 'The Kolhapur District Central Co-operative Bank' is today one of the richest and the most active co-operative banks in Maharashtra and India in distribution of loans and its recovery through the sale of agricultural produce. Kolhapur district has been the leader in the sugar industry for last many decades and holds the record of maximum yield in the whole of Maharashtra.

The jaggery of Kolhapur had attained fame all over the country since Shahu's time and continues to retain this popularity. Kolhapur is the leader in collection of milk through the medium of co-operative societies in not only Maharashtra but also in India. The Kolhapur District Co-operative Milk Society has created national record in milk collection. In Maharashtra cotton is produced in the regions of Vidarbha and Marathwada. However, the most efficient and ideal mills that manufacture yarn operate in the district of Kolhapur. The co-operative textile mills of Kolhapur-the district that does not produce cotton- today, manufacture and export high quality yarn to foreign countries. In short, Kolhapur has shown astounding progress in the co-operative sector. It should not be forgotten that at the root of this success lie the agro - industrial policy that Shahu had adopted almost a century ago and the impetus given by him to implement this policy.

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29.

ARTS AND ARTISTS

This is the running overview of various forms of art that came into existence in Kolhapur during the Shahu era and flourished over the later period. In fact, every art form mentioned below had been so rich and prosperous in Kolhapur that it deserves to be an independent subject of research for scholars. Kolhapur had become the hub of many an art such as hunting wrestling, music, drama, painting etc. during the period of Shahu.

ART OF HUNTING

Mrigaya (Hunting) is supposed to be a hobby of the kings and aristocrats from ancient times. and it is not just a hobby or a form of merriment; it is a sport and any sport is an art that evolves in a peculiar way. From this point of view, hunting or even wrestling should be considered as an art.

The hobby of hunting was traditionally practised in the royal family of Kolhapur as well; however, in the intermittent period of the reign of minor kings, hunting had virtually become extinct over a period of half a century. Shahu rejuvenated this art during his reign and took it to its acme. Shahaji Chhatrapati, grandson of Shahu Maharaja and the last coroneted king of Kolhapur, was a die-hard huntsman. He has written an article on his grandfather. In it he has said, "The credit for rejuvenation of the sport of hunting should be given to Shahu Maharaja.... Though the Maharaja had become an expert in handling gun and was proficient in using a shotgun, his true love was the then hunt of cheetah, falcon and wild boar practised predominantly in the South. In that too, the hunt of cheetah (i.e. hunting deers with the help of cheetahs) was the speciality of the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur."[1]

Shahu brought the technique of cheetah hunt to Kolhapur and developed it into a fine art to such an extent that Kolhapur acquired fame in this sport throughout the country. Speaking about Shahu, cheetah hunt became a hobby that he cherished the most among all other hunts. Cheetah is the fastest of all the animals found in nature. Its speed cannot be measured with eyes. Besides, the rhythm with which it runs and jumps possesses a scientific method. All these peculiarities are used in the hunt. A cheetah has to be trained

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for this purpose. Shahu had maintained many such cheetahs and trained them using special techniques. Protected forests were created at many places in the State for cheetah hunt. The cheetah would be trained to make a game only of the antelope present in the herd of deer. On the day of the hunt Shahu would himself frenziedly ride the horse cart that carried the cheetah. He would carry cheetahs to even far off places like Delhi for hunt. He had personally designed carts meant to carry cheetahs to far away distances. cheetah hunts would be organized in honour of eminent guests such as the Viceroy, Governor etc. visiting the State.[2]

Hunting of wild boar was another passion of the Maharaja. According to Latthe, Shahu derived great pleasure from this hunt which was an extremely dangerous sport. It included the chasing of a wild boar atop a horse and throwing a javelin at it to kill. It demands robust riding skills, courage, swiftness, presence of mind, patience, and physical strength of the hunter. If the horse falters on the chase of the boar, or the spear is miscued, the whole affair turns out to be a combat with death. The youngest son of Shahu Prince Shivaji had died during wild boar hunting.

There were many contemporary Indian Princes who indulged in hunting wild beasts such as tiger, bear etc. To undertake a hunt, qualities such as courage, presence of mind, tolerance, and accurate shooting abilities are required. Shahu possessed these qualities. He had hunted many a tiger and bear. In 1896, at the age of 22 he had made a game of a ferocious tiger around nine feet long. During this hunt, he had escaped death by a hair's breadth thanks to his presence of mind. The same kind of courage and presence of mind he had exhibited in the jungles of Radhanagari when a furious she-bear had marched on him. There he had to fight a 'man-to-man' bout with the beast. On another occasion, Shahu had taken on a cruel tiger of the *Tendva* breed that had incited terror in the Panhala region. In this case, he attacked the tiger; thrust his one hand clad with turban in its mouth and with the other hand strangled it to death using the extraordinary physical strength he possessed! This event should be considered outlandish in the history of hunting. Shahu performed one more act of amazing daring on a tiger hunt. In 1910, he personally pursued a huge tiger and made a game with the aid of his wild hounds! It was unprecedented in the history of hunting. Shahu had reported the details of this adventure to his teacher Fraser. Congratulating his disciple on his achievement, Fraser says, "A troop of hounds successfully hunting down a fully grown tiger is an act of great courage. I have not read of such incidence elsewhere. The whole episode is so very outstanding that I hope you will send its details to the magazine of the Bombay Natural History Society."[3]

Shahu also had developed the art of hunting with falcon. He had maintained and trained falcons of different breeds. With the help of these falcons, he would hunt down the extremely fast antelopes and *Maldhoks*.

Despite his love for hunting, Shahu had developed an affection for wild life. It should be noted that he was very meticulous in protection and conservation of the wild life in his State. On the eastern flank of Kolhapur, he had created protected areas for animals such as antelopes, wild boar, rabbits, wild fowl; while in the

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Sahyadris to the west he had reserved many forests as wild life sanctuaries. In these sanctuaries, various local animals such as tigers, panthers, elks, bisons, bears, wild boars, and various local as well as migratory birds lived in peace. Shahu had also transported wild elephants in these sanctuaries and had succeeded in the experiment of breeding the pachyderm locally.[4]

The various animals such as elephants, camels, horses, cheetahs that Shahu had maintained in his zoo added to the splendor of the capital. He was a king who especially loved elephants and horses. His biography contains events that speak of risking his life to control an elephant gone berserk. He brought the game of *Saathmari* –taming a drunken elephant— to Kolhapur from Baroda and developed it on his own lines. However, the sport as practised in Kolhapur was made more dangerous and exciting than the one in Baroda. Shahu built the arena of the game as per his ideas. The game in Baroda was played riding a horse. The tamers of Shahu would attack the elephant on feet and when the animal retorted would enter the bastions built in the rings. These would be the test of the qualities such as presence of mind and agility of the tormentor. Shahu built rings of this sport at Kolhapur, Sontali, Radhanagari, Panhala and Rookdi in the State. On one ring at Kolhapur he spent Rs.40,000 -(1915). He brought experts from outside the State and trained his people in the sport. Shankarrao Taste was the main sportsman. The sport of tormenting the elephant is a direct combat with death. Shahu brought such adventurous sport to Kolhapur and made it flourish. So much so that Kolhapur became a major centre of this sport equal in status to Baroda. Shahu was so keenly interested in the game that he personally designed equipments such as the peculiar tongs to be used during the sport and got those tongs manufactured in the technical school. Even today, these equipments are preserved in the Shri Shahaji Chatrapati Museum in the New Palace Kolhapur.

Along with *Sathmari*, Shahu introduced a novel sport of collision of elephants in Kolhapur. Earlier this would take place in the Old Palace square. Later, it was shifted to the *Sathmari* ring . A special technique would be adopted to prevent damage to the elephant tusks during the collision. A six feet wall would be erected between the two elephants. Thus the tender tusks and the delicate temple of the elephants would be protected.[5]

Shahu loved the Cheetah which is supposed to be a cruel animal. But he felt that even this ferocious animal parts with its natural tendency and returns love if it is bestowed with love. He had maintained a cheetah from Africa which was supposed to be extremely cruel. He had given it so much affection that he felt the beast would never betray him. To test the cheetah's domestication, he once tied its eyes and left it in the jungles miles away from Kolhapur. Surprisingly the beast returned searching for Shahu! He has narrated this incident in one of his speeches while elaborating the principle that love only begets love. In the living room of Shahu two fully grown cheetahs would move freely round and about him as if they were his pet dogs. This king enjoyed the company of animals such as tiger, elephants, horses more than the court flatterers.

ART OF WRESTLING

The art of wrestling also flourished in Kolhapur in the same way as the sport of

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hunting. It reached to such heights that Kolhapur acquired countrywide renown during Shahu's reign. A scholar of the princely times Hindurao Salunkhe has said in one of his articles, "In India Patiala is supposed to be the *Gangotri*- the origin- of the art of wrestling, while Kolhapur is supposed to be the *Maher*- the maternal abode- of wrestling. In the same vein Raghvendra Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala became known as the connoisseurs of wrestling while Shahu acquired fame as the patron of the art of wrestling and began to be regarded as the 'wrestler of the wrestlers'!"[6]

From ancient times, wrestling has received patronage from kings and aristocrats in India. In Shahu's time there were many Princes in the country who loved this sport. There was a difference between these Princes and the Maharaja of Kolhapur. Shahu himself was a skilled wrestler. He was initiated into the art of wrestling from his very childhood. Two wrestlers had accompanied him even when he was sent to Rajkot and Dharwad for schooling. In 1894 on ascending the throne, he decided to rejuvenate the art of wrestling in the State. That year the first wrestling competition was organized in Kolhapur. The next year, Motibaug palaestra was founded in the precincts of the Old Palace area. In this palaestra, along with other wrestlers the King himself continued to get trained in wrestling from his coaches namely Dattoba Shinde, Pandoba Bhonsle, and Balekhan Pathan. In 1897, Shahu was blessed with a baby boy. To celebrate, he arranged wrestling competition on a grand scale to celebrate the birth of his son. Renowned wrestlers from the north were invited to participate. These guest wrestlers from Punjab one after the other knocked wrestlers of Kolhapur out of the competition. Shahu was shocked to see this decimation and decided that one day the wrestlers from Kolhapur would make the Punjabi wrestlers eat dust. The lessons learned from this disaster contained the seeds of future greatness of Kolhapur wrestlers who became victorious in many a national bout.

In the period that followed Shahu extended generous patronage to wrestling. In every ward of Kolhapur new *Akhadas* or palaestras were set up. Old palaestras were bestowed with grants and began to function vigorously. Talented wrestlers were spotted and arrangements for their training and diet were made. Experienced coaches were appointed to train budding wrestlers. These coaches observed the techniques of the Punjabi wrestlers and taught it to their pupils. The wrestlers of Kolhapur mastered the art within no time. On Shahu's initiative, wrestling bouts were arranged in Kolhapur twice a week at the Old Palace, New Palace, and on the open moorland of Chauphala.. Along with the winners, losers were also awarded prizes and their dignity maintained. Gradually the people of the State developed a keen interest in wrestling. Gymnasiums with Palaestras were set up in villages all over the State. From these villages young men began to arrive in Kolhapur for advanced training in wrestling. Parents from outside the State also began sending their children to Kolhapur to train in the art of wrestling. Meanwhile, flocks of Punjabi wrestlers from the North made a bee line to Kolhapur as they continued to receive generous patronage from the King of Kolhapur. The Darbar arranged for their exercise and diet. In this way, Shahu, an expert wrestler himself, rewarded their skill in the art of wrestling.

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In 1902 when Shahu went to England to attend the coronation ceremony of King Edward VII, he took the opportunity to visit Europe. While watching the grand heritage of Rome he came across the huge arena the ancient Romans had built for wrestling and duels and he was impressed by its mighty proportions. He decided to build a similar arena in his capital. Later he started the construction of the wrestling stadium in 1907 that was completed in 1912. In that very year, the new stadium was inaugurated by a bout between Imambaksh and Gulam Mohiddin, the greatest wrestlers of India. The stadium became famous as Shahu Khasbaug Maidan and no other wrestling stadium in the whole of India equaled this one. After its construction, wrestling competitions began to be held in Kolhapur regularly. Wrestlers from all over the country, especially Punjab and Delhi were attracted towards Kolhapur. Kolhapur became the University of wrestling of India.

As a result of the patronage offered by Shahu, a generation of mighty wrestlers flourished in Kolhapur. There were hundreds of such wrestlers. Some among these were Krishna Mardane, Shivappa Berad, Vyankappa Burud, Ganpat Shinde,Govind Kasbekar, Babu Bire, Ganu Bhonsle, Devappa Dhangar, Devappa Halingale, Gopal Parit and Dnyanu Mane. These were the wrestlers who knocked out many a renowned wrestler of the North namely Hamdu Kaka, Bhola Punjabi, Akram, Navrangsingh, Dharmsingh, etc. and gave them a taste of the waters of the Panchganga. They put to an end the monopoly of the wrestlers of the North and realized the dream their King had seen in 1897. Shahu treated the Northern wrestlers with affection in the same way as his own wrestlers. Renowned wrestlers of the North - Gulam Mohiddin, Guttasingh, Rajab Pailwan, Imambaksh, Kallu Gama, Gulam Haider,Vajir Punjabi, Fakira Punjabi, Usman Pailwan, Bindu Pailwan, Nattha Pailwan —resided in the palaestras of Kolhapur for some time receiving Shahu's generous hospitality. A substantial amount of Rs. 30,000 would be spent annually on provisions for wrestlers. (In those days one rupee fetched 10-12 *Shers* of milk). These expenses would be deferred from the privy purse of the King and not from the State exchaquer![7]

While encouraging the wrestlers caste, or religion of the wrestlers was of no significance to Shahu. With his inspiration and motivation, wrestlers from backward communities of *Mahar, Bhangi, Berad, Burud* came to the fore. Shahu made wrestlers out of the men from the nomadic tribe of the monkey-tamers. He started calling the *Mahar* and *Bhangi* wrestlers as *Jat Pailwan* and *Pandit Pailwan* respectively so that the caste conscious wrestlers of the North should not refrain from entering into bouts with them. This infused a new self-respect among the wrestlers and people these castes. This simple act of Shahu made an enduring social impact.

Shahu not only patronised the wrestlers but loved them like his children. He brought Devappa, the son of a shepherd, to Kolhapur and made a strong wrestler out of him. Devappa earlier would run after the King's chariot without showing signs of tiredness. He showed so much progress in wrestling that Shahu became confident he would bring the highest title in wrestling, Rustum-i-Hind, to Kolhapur. Sadly, Devappa was struck with cholera. When Shahu went to the hospital to see him his condition brought tears to Shahu's eyes. He said to the doctor, "Save my Devappa, doctor. I will give you as much gold as his

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weight!"[8] A king who loved his wrestlers in such a fashion should be considered exceptional.

The wrestlers too returned his love in the same fashion. It was seen during the competitions organized in 1911 by British officials on the occasion of the Delhi Darbar. The venue was packed with wrestlers from all over India and the lovers of the sport. Among the dignitaries present were the Viceroy himself, Governors of different provinces, and many highly ranked British officers. In this crowded stadium Shahu's grand personality in simple attire attracted the attention of all and sundry. Especially the wrestlers of Northern India made a beeline to bow and pay respects to him. It was a public manifestation of great honour and respect with which the King of Kolhapur was held by all the great wrestlers of India. The famous wrestler Chandan from Punjab carried the seat of the Maharaja and kept it at the entrance of the wrestling ring! When the competitions began, it was found that Rahimbaksh and Gama, the duo contending the opening bout were absent and it became a matter of prestige for the dignitaries. To save the situation, Shahu himself stepped forward and showing presence of mind, announced a bout between Guttasingh and Nattha, the Punjabi wrestlers who had resided in Kolhapur; and appealed Imambaksh and Hasanbaksh, the two greats of the time, to take the ring to contend the fight of the first order. Both the greats honoured Sahahu's words, entered the ring, and won over the audience with an exciting performance. Imambaksh won the bout. The crowd went wild with excitement. Shahu removed his own turban and put it on Imambaksh's head to honour him. Though Hasanbaksh had lost, Sahahu admired him for the outstanding skill he had displayed and honoured him as well with a similar turban.[9] This incident at the historical venue at Delhi sealed Shahu's image countrywide as the patron of the art of wrestling.

Shahu was lavishly generous in admiring the qualities of wrestlers. He awarded silver maces, golden anklets and wrist ornaments and medals to many a wrestler. He took a few champions in ceremonial processions atop elephants. Some were taken into Darbar service while some were given residences and farmlands as *Inams*. Pensions were started to a few. Special funds were created for that purpose. From this fund arrangements were made to provide health care and economic assistance to the wrestlers in their old age.

Even today, Kolhapur is at the forefront in wrestling and has preserved the glowing tradition of Shahu's era. The city has won the honour *Hind Kesari* accorded at the national level four times. The great wrestlers namely Shripatrao Khanchnale, Ganpatrao Andalkar, Hajrat Patel, Dinanath Singh and Vinod Chougule have won that epithet. Harishchandra Birajdar, Dadu Chougule have won the other equally important title Rustum-i-Hind. All these wrestlers except Hajrat Patel are alive and reside in the city adding to its grandeur. All of them owe their success to the pioneering work of Shahu. Accepting the challenge of Satpal, a great wrestler from Haryana; Yuvraj Patil, another national wrestler fought three successful bouts with the challenger. In 1991, the people of Kolhapur honoured Satpal's coach Padmashri Guru Hanuman with 'Shahu Award'. The act befitted the tradition nursed by Shahu.

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MANLY SPORTS (*Mardani Khel*)

Apart from wrestling Shahu rejuvenated many other manly sports or *Mardani Khel* such as *Dandpatta, Farigadga, Veeta, Jambiya, Bana,* popular in Maharashtra from the times of Shivaji the Great. A Maratha youth was trained in the art of combat through these very games. The fighters of Shivaji's times namely Baji Pasalkar, Baji Prabhu Deshpande, Santaji Ghorpade were proficient in these sports.. Shahu gave a new lease of life to this tradition. His wrestling coach Vastad Hasan Balekhan was supposed to be an expert of arms. Apart from him, many others such as Dadu Mali, Yesba Hujare, Yashwantrao Salunkhe, Ganpatrao Sasne, Bala Nalavade etc. were experts in these sports. Shahu encouraged them and under their guidance brought to the fore a generation of young sportsmen. Every palaestra began to provide training of manly sports along with wrestling and along with the wrestlers, these sportsmen began to make waves with their skills in manly sports. During wrestling competitions, the demonstrations of these sports would be arranged at the beginning. Also these sports would be arranged in the honour of British dignitaries such as the Viceroy, Governor, etc. visiting the State.

In the sport called *Veeta,* the sportsman would use the instrument *Veeta* in such an amazing manner that he would not allow about a dozen attackers within a circle of 15-20feet radius around him. The British officers would greatly admire the skill and swiftness of the player. During the visit of Prince of Wales to Poona to lay the foundation of the Shivaji Memorial, Shahu had organized a special programme of manly sports performed by Balekhan Vastad. Balekhan had performed with *Veeta* and startled the audience with his skill. A similar performance was demonstrated in Madras. In his visit to Kolhapur, Dr. Arundel of the Theosophical Society of Adyar was so very impressed with the demonstrations of these sports that he requested Shahu to send a team of these sportsmen to Adyar. This team demonstrated its talent at many places including Madras and Adyar. In Madras, the games were performed before the Governor. Everyone including the Governor was astonished to see the expertise the players exhibited in different sports like *Dandpatta, Farigadga, Veeta, Jambiya* etc. The sportsmen were given handsome rewards by the Governor and felicitated. Thus, the sportsmen of Kolhapur carried the banner of their manly sports up to Madras.[10]

MUSIC

Three important forms of fine art, music, drama and painting, flourished during the reign of Shahu to such heights that his reign is considered the golden age of these arts in Maharashtra. As far as music is concerned, before the age of Shahu popular forms of music such as *Kirtan, Tamasha, Lavni, Saki, Dindi, Fatka, Bhajan and* songs of *Vaghya Murli* were in vogue in the State. Classical musical forms such as *Dhrupad Dhamar, Thumri, Gazal* had patrons among the elites such as the Kings, aristocrats, landlords and moneylenders. Especially during the *Navratri* festival of the Darbar and the *Ramnavmi* festival of the *Pant Amatya* (an aristocratic family of the State), programmes of folk music as well as classical music would be arranged. Renowned artists from without the State would be invited to perform at the *Navratri* festival. During this period, the city of Kolhapur would be filled with music.

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Shahu's biological father Abasaheb himself was an aficionado of the art of music. A music institute namely 'Kolhapur Gayan Samaj' was founded in the city in 1883, well before Sahahu's adoption ceremony and ascension to the throne. It was the first institute in India that was fully dedicated to music. The legacy of passion for music had come down to Shahu in this fashion. In 1892, the famous Deval Club was founded with encouragement from Shahu who granted land and provided financial help for construction of its building.[11] With Shahu's encouragement and patronage this institute later acquired nationwide fame. The renowned music expert S.A.Kulkarni commenting on the 'art of music and drama of Shahu's period' says, "....Today, many vocalists belonging to different gharanas (schools) of music have acquired fame in the country. Their lineage was nurtured in the city of Kolhapur and the main promulgator had been Shahu Maharaja. Later on, when out of Shahu's good graces Deval Club of Kolhapur became renowned, every vocalist in the country, male or female, would crave to perform for the Club. All those artistes who could perform there -- vocal or instrumental- reached heights of fame in the country."[12]

Deval Club was instrumental in making Kolhapur a music centre of national stature. A similar task was performed by a great artiste regarded as *Gaurishankar* in the field of music. He was *Ganmaharshi* Alladiya Khan. Shahu with great honour brought him to his Darbar as a vocalist in 1895 and the music of the Jaipur *gharana* (school)was displayed for the first time before the cultured saviors of Maharashtra and Kolhapur. As his brother Haiderkhan and three sons namely Manji Khan, Bhurji Khan and Nasiruddun Khan had come along with him, it was as if a university of music was established in Kolhapur. From this university graduated Alladiya Khan's great disciples - Pandit Bhaskarbuwa Bakhale, Haider Khan, Manji Khan, Kesarbai Kerkar, Mogubai Kurdikar, Jasdanwala, Jariwala, Govindbuwa Shaligram, Nivruttibuan Sarnaik - who later acquired all India renown. Kesarbai was originally the disciple of the renowned vocalist Abdul Karim Khan. Later on at a musical concert, she expressed her strong desire to learn the style of Alladiyan Khan. Shahu requested the Khansaheb. He accepted and taught Kesarbai with open heart. One day Kesarbai performed before Shahu the classical *ragas* taught by Alladiyan Khan perfectly in his celebrated style. Shahu was impressed and said, "...My child, now I am sure you will immortalize the Khansaheb's style of singing. A day will come when your singing will be acclaimed all over India."[13] Kesarbai made these words come true by her achievements. She became a vocalist of national renown. Gurudev Ravindranath Tagore honoured her with the title of *'Surashri'* on behalf of his Vishvabharti. In post-Independence India, she was awarded the title of *Padmabhushan*. It was an honour of Kesarbai's heavenly singing as well as the great work of Alladiya Khan and Shahu Maharaja in the field of music.[14] Speaking in honour of the outstanding work of Alladiya Khan, music expert Baburao Joshi says, "Alladiya Khan created a separate tradition of music that was beautiful and peculiar and intellectually and emotionally satisfying. In his person Kolhapur gained an ornament.....Kolhapur was lucky to have gained for itself such an instrumentalist and a vocalist of enormous talent. Kolhapur today is living its art life riding on the traditions set by Khansaheb just the way the scions of great forefathers

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take pride showing off on the greatness of their ancestors. The one who made Kolhapur great, or more accurately the only reason why Kolhapur became famous throughout the country in the field of music was Alladiyan Khan, and therefore I always propose that this style of singing should be called as the Kolhapur *gharana* ...Another artiste of this kind of genius would but rarely occur in the world."[15]

Besides Alladiyan Khan, Shahu had offered his patronage to various other great artists like the famous vocalist of Devas Rajab Ali Khan, his father Mughale Khan, the pioneer of Kirana *gharana* Haiderbaksh Khan, Abdul Karim Khan, Alladiyan Khan's brother Haider Khan son Bhurji Khan, Natthan Khan and Anjanibai Malpekar. Rajab Ali Khan during his sojourn in Kolhapur made Nivruttibuwa Sarnaik and *Nutan Gandharva* Appasaheb Deshpande his disciples.

Haiderbaksh Khan taught the art of singing to the famous vocalist Abdul Karim Khan who achieved immortal fame in the field of music on the basis of this training. Other great vocalist Anjanibai Malpekar achieved a fame of a similar kind all over India. Many a king and aristocrat would visit her house to have a taste of her music. She would be treated with great respect in the courts of many a Raja and Maharaja. The other female vocalist of Kolhapur famous as *Gaanchandrika* throughout India was Laxmibai Jadhav. She was the disciple of Haider Khan, the brother of Alladiyan Khan. Later on, she entered the services of the Baroda State as court vocalist. Bhurji Khan, the son of Alladiyan Khan, taught artists such as Azambai, Sardarbai, C.Balaji, Appasaheb Deshpande etc. There is a long list of outstanding vocalists who emerged from this seat of music- the city of Kolhapur! With Shahu's active encouragement, they all strived hard, reached great heights in the field of music and immortalized the name of Kolhapur.[16]

In this way, the connoisseur of classical music in Shahu attracted the great performers of different *gharanas* of music from all over India. Shahu brought about a pleasant confluence of various styles of performance in Kolhapur and along with Kolhapur imbibed the whole of Maharashtra with the taste of classical music. Moreover, he created a tradition of great Maharashtrian vocalists. Even after independence artists such as Nivrutibuwa Sarnaik, Shankarrao Sarnaik, Jaggannathbuwa Purohit, Vishwanathbuan Jadhav, Anandrao Limaye, Appasaheb Deshpande are seen to have preserved the tradition of music that had come down from the days of Shahu.

Shahu also encouraged *Bhajan* singing along with classical music. Many singers of Bhajan such as Tukarambuwa Sarnaik, Panditrao Karambalekar, Krishna Bagnikar etc. became famous all over Maharashtra during the period of Shahu. *Shahiri**should also be considered a form of vocal music. Shahu encouraged this masculine art. *Shahir*** Vitthal Done, *Shahir* Ramchandra Mali, *Shahir* Ishwara Mali, *Shahir* Lahri Haider were the renowned *Shahirs* of those times. Many troupes of *Shahirs* known as *Kalgiwale* and *Turewale* became prominent during the reign of Shahu. The speciality of musical question-answer bouts - apparently with promiscuous romantic

*An art of reciting ballads.
** A Bard.

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references but couched within them deeper philosophical and spiritual meanings, a form which required a talent for repartee and some spiritual understanding – added to the fame of the *Shahirs*. *Shahir* Lahri Haider had special position in the personal circle of the Maharaja.[17] After independence, the foremost disciples of Lahri Haider including *Shahirvisharad* Pirajirao Sarnaik, *Shahirshardul* Bhausaheb Patil, *Shahir* Shripatrao Lokhande carried the *Shahiri* tradition of Kolhapur forward. Pirajirao made famous the *Shahiri* of Kolhapur throughout Maharashtra. He performed his artistry in a cultural program organized in Delhi in 1955 when the president of Soviet Union Bulganin had come to India on a state visit. He won accolades from Bulganin and Pandit Nehru for his performance.[18] In this way Pirajirao waved higher the flag of the art of Kolhapuri *Shahiri* in Delhi.

THEATRE

Along with music Shahu was equally fond of theatre and gave it generous patronage. Largely because of Shahu's involvement, these two forms of art together enriched the cultural life of Kolhapur and Maharashtra in the first half of the twentieth century. The mere fact that Kolhapur has given artistes such as Balgandharva and Keshavrao Bhonsle to Marathi Theater is enough to bring out the significance of Kolhapur in this field.

Around the time of Shahu's adoption in 1884, the art of drama had just made its appearance in Kolhapur. A professional theater group called Narharbuwa Kolhapurkar Natak Mandali had come into existence. Amateur artistes from Rajaram College who used to perform 'bookish' plays, staged a performance of the play *Shashikala-Ratnapal* on the occasion of adoption ceremony before the child Chhatrapati who was ten years old. It was the first play that Shahu had seen. He liked it. With understanding, his liking towards this art grew and finally developed into a refined taste and a classical predilection. The very next year Rajaram College declared a play writing competition. Two young writers namely Vasudev Shastri Khare and Govind Ballal Deval sent their scripts to the competition. Out of the two, the play *Gunotkarsh* written by Khare Shastri was selected. In this way, the first competition in the field of Marathi Theater provided Marathi stage with two talented dramatists. Shahu saw the performance of *Gunotkarsha* as well. Now special performances of old plays began to be arranged especially for him in the open square of the Old Palace.[19] Moreover with the spread of Shahu's fame as enthusiastic savour of theater, drama companies such as Dongre Sangeet Natak Mandali, Kirloskar Natak Mandali began to visit Kolhapur and perform. The famous vocalist of Kolhapur Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjikar had composed the music of the famous play *Indrasabha* of the Dongre Company. Balkrishnabuwa was the first music director of Marathi Theater. The credit of bringing North Indian music to Maharashtra also goes to Balkrishnabuan. In 1894 on the occasion of the coronation of Shahu many drama companies including Kirloskar, Shahunagarwasi, Swadesh Hitchintak had visited Kolhapur. Their performances would be arranged at the Old Palace, Laxmi Prasad Theater, Jivbanana Wada and Himmat Bahadar Paga. The Kolhapur Darbar would take great care of the companies. All kinds of grocery right from *Ambemohor* rice to bathing soaps would be supplied to the company.[20] Kirloskar, Shahunagarwasi were especially

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in the good books of Shahu. The Hamlet played by Ganpatrao Joshi of Shahunagarwasi had impressed him greatly. The way Ganpatrao performed this role deserved immortality on the stage.[21]

Like Ganpatrao Joshi, Shahu had great affection for Dattopant Halyalkar, the other vocalist/singer–actor. He had left Goa Natak Mandali, came to Kolhapur and started Mahalaxmi Prasadik Company with support from Shahu. The King had invited many drama companies on the occasion of wedding ceremony of Princess Akkasaheb. It is said that on this occasion Dattopant's performance of the play *Mrichhakatik* in the Palace was so touching that the women from the royal family sobbed with grief. On occassions Shahu would arrange his vocal performances in the Palace and then dine with him. On the dining table, a sparkling conversation on music and other affairs would ensue.[22]

Around this period, many drama companies had come into existence in Kolhapur. Among these, there was a company run by women, an outstanding thing in those times. Sheshasani, a woman belonging to the family of professional courtesans had started Sheshasani Stree Sangeet Natak Mandali, a first drama company of women in the history of theatre. Sheshasani used to perform *Naldamayanti, Saubhadra, Shakuntal* and other plays.[23]

Dattopant Bhosle was the elder brother of famous singer Keshavrao Bhonle. He had come into prominence as an actor. He had first entered Swadesh Hitchintak Mandali with Keshavrao who was just four years of age at that time. He was a member along with Vishnupant Aundhkar, Bhaurao Jadhav, Bhagwat, Dinkar Dhere, Vishnupant Pagnis in Kolhapur Sangeet Natak Mandali formed with Shahu's encouragement. Dattopant's roles in plays *Mrichhakatik* and *Manapman* received wide acclaim in those days. In later years he switched to directing plays.[24]

During this period Govindrao Tembe, a versatile artist, had begun to make waves on Marathi stage. He was a seasoned actor, dramatist, poet, connoisseur, musical expert, and the greatest harmonium player of those times. He used to give brilliant performances in roles of *Charudatta* and *Kacha* in Kirloskar Drama Company. He wrote a number of plays as well. His many plays including *Siddhasansar and Chitravanchana.* were greatly appreciated by audiences. Many of his musical dramas also became popular. But his greatest contribution was his guidance and training in music to great singer-actors like Narayanrao Rajhans alias Balgandharv (who still remains a great musical icon of Maharashtra) and *Maharashtra Kokil* Shankarrao Sarnaik. Particularly the sweet songs laced with classical style sung by Balgandharva became a rage and entered middle class Maharashtrian homes partly because of the music of Govindrao.[25] Around 1915-16, Govindrao founded Shivraj Sangeet Mandali on orders of Shahu. Sarnaik ,the artist with a very sweet voice, would play the role of the female protagonist in the Company. Shahu had taken the Company under his wings providing it everything, from daily grocery to the drapery. Baburao Painter who later received the epithet of *Kalamaharshi* had painted the curtains of the company with outstanding skill.[26] Govindrao spent all his life serving music and theatre. Among artistes he nurtured were many great names besides Balgandharva and Sarnaik. Hirabai Badodekar was but one of them. It was Govindrao who gave an appreciable,

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invigorating, aesthetic and revolutionary character to Marathi theatrical music through the performances of Balgandharva. He was instrumental in enlightening Maharashtra about the greatness of *Sangeetsamrat* Alladiya Khan's style of singing.[27]

Shankarrao Sarnaik, the son of *Bhajan* king Tukarambuwa Sarnaik was one more shining star in the galaxy of artistes of Kolhapur. This artiste, who was born with the gift of voice as sweet as cuckoo, made Maharashtra crazy with his songs. The music savours of Maharashtra bestowed upon him the epithet of *Kokilkanth* -one with the voice of a cuckoo. On Shahu's insistence, he joined the Shivraj Natak Company of Govindrao Tembe and achieved fame as a great singer-actor with a sweet voice. Later in 1919, he left *Shivraj* and started his own Yashwant Sangeet Mandali. This company received royal patronage from Tukojirao Holkar, the Ruler of Indore. The Company had famous singers Wamanrao Sadolikar and Shankarrao's brother Nivruttibuwa Sarnaik as artistes. Shankarrao ran the Company until the year 1934. Later on, he devoted his life to singing *Bhajans*.[28]

The history of the theatre of not only Kolhapur but also of Maharashtra cannot be complete without mentioning 'Balgandharva' Narayanrao Rajhans and *Sangeetsurya* Keshavrao Bhosale. These two great artistes were the priceless gifts Kolhapur had given to Marathi theatre; and behind this gift was instrumental Shahu's foresight, magnanimous nature and classical predilection toward the art of drama. Shahu happened to hear a performance of Narayanrao when the latter was in Kolhapur in his childhood. He appreciated and accurately judged Narayanrao's skill as a vocalist, the sweetness of his voice and beautiful physique and sent him to Kirloskar Natak Company at Miraj. Narayanrao was given the role of *Shakuntala* in the play *Shakuntal*. Shahu was present for the first show. Narayanrao took his blessings, made his entry, and by his outstanding performance won over the audience. Shahu was happy his judgment was proved correct.[29] Thenceforth Narayanrao never looked back. Impressed by his qualities Tilak bestowed on him the epithet of Balgandharv. An artiste par excellence, as though sent from heavens specially for the Marathi theatre. By his enchanting performances in the roles of women and with his heavenly vocal abilities, he cast a magic spell on Marathi savours for decades.[30] Later he left Kirloskar Company and started his own Gandharva Sangeet Mandali. Shahu showered the company with his blessings until the end.

Marathi Theatre was blessed with one more artiste of outstanding abilities just like Balgandharva in the person of Keshavrao Bhonsle. Along with his elder brother, he entered the Swadesh Hitchintak Mandali of Janubhau Nimkar at the tender age of four and at the age of ten received a 'once more' from Shahu for his performance in the role of Sharda![31] Later , at the age of 18 he established a company called Lalitkaladarsh Mandali (1908). This company blessed the Marathi theatre with great dramatists such as Veer Wamanrao Joshi and B.V. Varerkar. It performed many shows of their plays in Kolhapur and rest of Maharashtra. In Kolhapur, it organized joint musical performances with Balgandharva. He reached the pinnacle of popularity after the performance of the play *Manapman* in Bombay. It was performed jointly with Balgandharva in 1921. A

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historical contest between Balgandharva and Keshavrao, the shining moon and the sun of Marathi Theatre – that was how the glorious performance was described. A welknown artist and writer of Marathi P.L. Deshpande writes about this performance thus, "....Just as the eleven sixes hit by C.K. Naidu is an unprecedented event in the field of cricket, the joint performance of Keshav-Narayan will remain a unique event of the Marathi stage. In this show, Keshavrao was Dhairyadhar while Narayanrao performed Bhamini. How does one compare the vocal talents of Keshavrao and Narayanrao? However, history has it that in the joint performance of *Manapman*, audiences appreciated Keshavrao more"[32] On that day, Keshavrao stole the show. The energy, liveliness, and talent in his singing stunned the whole of Maharashtra. His qualities, like the radiance of the sun, illuminated the world of music. The savours bestowed upon him the epithet of *Sangeetsurya.** The rigorous coaching he had received at the feet Dattopant Jambhekar and Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze was put to best use by this genius. Behind all the success of Keshavrao lay the motherly affection and the savours' heart of Shahu. B.V. Varerkar dedicated his play *Kunjvihari* to Shahu Maharaja. On that occasion Shahu said to him, "Mr. Varerkar, it is my honour that you dedicated this play to me. Now my Kesha (Keshavrao) is standing on his own. Write a play for him....but do not forget Keshav. Kesha is a glittering sword. If you get it, you will win the world."[33] Only Shahu would dare refer Keshavrao who was radiating with the brilliance of a sun as Kesha with affection!

Shahu felicitated Keshavrao in 1916 when he visited Kolhapur with his company. Shahu, the connoisseur of arts, got constructed an open air theatre having a capacity of 25,000 in Khasbaug stadium behind Palace Theatre so that all of his subjects could get to see the play *Mrichhakatik*. During his sojourn in Kolhapur, Keshavrao performed many shows of his play. The capital was overwhelmed with his music. The Maharaja himself had booked many a show for the Darbar. Pleased with Keshavrao's performances Shahu bestowed upon him handsome remuneration. Keshavrao who was magnanimous by nature spent all his earnings gained in Kolhapur in religious deeds and helping institutions such as the Deval Club. Such a qualified, renowned, gifted artiste died at a very young age of 32. The sun of music of the Marathi stage had set.[34] On hearing the news the eyes of Shahu, a person as strong as a mountain, filled with tears. Varerkar offered homage to Keshavrao in these words, "...He came on the stage at the age of five and left it for heaven at the age of mere 32. He had no formal education as his entire life was spent in the theatre. But what a great vision he had! He illuminated Marathi Theatre, brought new play writers, new actors, new technicians and new sculptors to the fore and changed the character of Marathi Theatre completely. This singer whose abilities were dreaded by many a great vocalist was an equally accomplished actor. After Bhaurao Kolhatkar, no other actor has shown the mettle of Keshavrao. Would god send Keshavrao to Maharashtra again in the later period to infuse new life in theater that has become lifeless today?"[35]

During this period Palace Theatre, the eternal symbol of Shahu's love for arts was completed. On his visit to Italy in 1902, Shahu had seen the huge theaters in Rome along with the wrestling arenas and taken a decision of building such structures in his state as well. Accordingly, the wrestling

* The Sun of music

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stadium had been built. Now the construction to realize the dream of a drama theatre began (1913). A grand theatre on Roman lines was built just within three years. In 1915, it was inaugurated by Crown Prince Rajaram with shows *Saubhadra* and *Manapman* performed by Keshavrao Bhonsle's company, Lalitkaladarsha, and Kirloskar Company respectively. Now the various artistes and drama companies of Maharashtra had at their disposal a theatre of their own to perform their art. In those days, there was no other comparable theatre as huge and regal as the Palace Theatre in the whole of India! After independence Maharashtra Government renamed it as 'Keshavrao Bhonsle Natyagriha' to perpetuate the memory of the great artiste of Shahu's times. This act well suited the tradition of Kolhapur.

The urban society was fond of the art of drama whereas the ignorant and uneducated rural populace was the patron of the art of *Tamasha*, a genuine folk form of drama. As a form of entertainment of the lay masses, it is today called folk theatre. Instances of Shahu's encouragement to this form of art are available. Shahu had specially invited Tatya Savlajkar, the renowned *Tamasha* artist of those times and the famous *Lavni* poet, Patthe Bapurao Retharekar, to the Sontali camp and honoured their art. Tatya's play *Mohna-Batav* had become immensely popular. When Shahu went to a fair at Kagal, he saw his performance. Pleased with the artistic skills of Tatya, the King felicitated him with a *Jaripatka* and a purse containing Rs. 1,000.[36] Later, Shahu changed the form and objective of the *Tamasha*, structured the Satyashodhak Jalsa out of it and made *Tamasha* a powerful means of social reformation, a phenomenon discussed earlier.

CINEMA

Drama had an ancient tradition. Marathi Theatre came into existence in the later half of the 19th century in Maharashtra. Shahu played a major role in creating a golden era of music and drama by offering royal patronage to these arts. As compared with these art forms, the rise of cinema is of recent origin. Though it was an expression of the art of acting, it was based on modern science and technology and its invention had come to India from Europe. In the early days, the art of cinema existed in a silent mode. Later it began to talk. It flourished once the silent cinema was transformed into talkies. The era of silent movies in India was started by two Maharashtrian youths namely Dadasaheb Torne and Dadasaheb Phalke. According to cine-artist Suryakant Mandre's recent research, 'Pundalik', the film by Torne released in 1912, was the first film made in India; the very next year Phalke released his film Raja Harishchandra in 1913.[37] However, today it is Phalke who is considered as father of the Indian cinema. Though Phalke set up a studio on the banks of Godawari at Nasik giving it the honour of Gangotri of Indian cinema, this art took root and flourished in the true sense on the bank of Panchganga in Kolhapur. So much so that Kolhapur city became the maternal abode of the Marathi film industry, the architect of this great achievement being *Kalamaharshi* Baburao Painter.

Baburao was a classic creative genius of Kolhapur. He was a sculptor, a technician and most importantly, he had unyielding devotion to art. This extraordinary artist with a born gift of talent had no Guru. He had received no training of any form of art under anyone. Nevertheless, he was the creator of art of the highest order. He had a

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craving for creation and would always keep on experimenting. When foreign films first arrived in India and the likes of Phalke began to make films in India following their example, Baburao was strongly attracted towards this new form of art. He decided to enter in this field with the support of his brother Anandrao Painter. Anandrao too was a versatile artist. These brothers started a cinema theatre named *Maharashtra Cinema* in Kolhapur in 1913. It was beautifully decorated. The brothers had aesthetically painted the four walls of the theater with their brush. They had painted pictures based on stories from *Puranas*. When Shahu inaugurated the theatre, he was astonished to see the outstanding talent in painting the brothers commanded. Admiring the two brothers he said, "Anandrao, who is going to see this decoration of yours? Your film will run in the dark. It would be a different case if this decoration could be seen on the screen!"[38] The last sentence of the Maharaja revolutionized the thinking of Painter brothers. The seeds of Kolhapur's glorious film tradition of the future were sown. They decided to master this new form of art and went to Nasik to see the camera Phalke had imported. Phalke asked them, "What would you understand just looking at the camera?", and sent them back. The brothers did not loose heart. They decided to manufacture a movie camera indigenously and began their work-(1914). Unfortunately, Anandrao soon expired. Baburao got over the shock and continued with his research. Finally, by the middle of 1917, he was successful in making an indigenous movie camera, the first in India that was entirely *swadeshi*. By the end of that very year, Baburao established Maharashtra Film Company in Kolhapur. Later, Shahu donated special land to Baburao's company in Mangalwar Peth in Kolhapur. The film company began its operations there.[39]

Baburao selected the story of the famous play *Kichakwadh* for the first production of the company titled *Sairandhri*. Natyacharya Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar had written the play. As actors and actresses, he picked up Balasaheb Yadav, Dattoba Powar, Gulabbai and Anusayabai from Kolhapur, men and women who had never put on a make up on their faces. It was Baburao's insistence that women alone should play the female roles. (Earlier even in films female part was played by males!) Baburao had a large number of disciples. Along with his associates Vishnupant Damle, S. Fattelal, Baba Gajbar, Nanasaheb Sarpotdar, Limaye and Dharmadhikari, he started shooting *Sairandhri* on his self-made camera and printing machine. In 1920 *Sairandhri* was first released in Pune and it was widely admired. *Kesari* commented, "..The scenes in the films and costumes of characters suit the description in the *puranic* texts. This is a peculiarity of the film. As this venture has been undertaken with the commendable motto of depicting to people the social conditions of the *puranic* times, this cinema is sure to give a favourable direction to the taste of the people. In this film, which the owner of the company Baburao Painter has made using all equipment such as camera and printing machine completely made in India, nothing has been left wanting in any aspect such as photography and the rest. This film equals the famous American and European films. We congratulate Baburao and his associates on this grand achievement"[40] Tilak himself saw the film and publicly honoured Baburao with a gold medal and the epithet of *Cinemakesari* or the lion of cinema. Realistic but artistic treatment was the

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hallmark of Baburao's films. The shooting of the killing of villainous Kichak in *Sairandhri* was so effective that while watching it the audiences shouted and screamed. Women fainted and fell down! Baburao had shot this scene without any facility for trick scenes. After watching the scene on the screen, Bombay police had sent a show cause notice to Baburao which said, "....You have killed a human being in the cinema Sairandhri; why should you not be prosecuted?"[41]

It was a matter of pride for the Maharaja and Kolhapur that such an artist of outstanding brilliance lived during his reign and in his city of art. Shahu invited him for a special felicitation. The success of *Sairandhri* took the name of Baburao and Kolhapur to every nook and corner of India. In his career, he directed 33 films in total; 24 for his own *Maharashtra Film Company* and nine for other companies. His company was like the *ashram* of some ancient Indian sage. He generously gifted away his art and knowledge to willing disciples. Many accomplished artists such as Balasaheb Yadav, Zunzarrao (Dattoba)Powar, Baburao Pendharkar, Kishabhau Bakre, stunt king Ganpatrao Bakre, V. Sahntaram, Vishnupant Pagnis, Master Vitthal, Bal Gajbar, I.T.Nimbalkar, B.Nandrekar who came into prominence in the film industry subsequently, were the products of Baburao's *ashram!* Later in1929, the disciples of Baburao namely V. Shantaram, Damle, S.Fattelal and Keshavrao Dhaibar left Maharashtra Film Company and started their own *Prabhat Film Company* in Kolhapur. Baburao graced them with his blessings. This company produced the talky *Ayodhyecha Raja* and brought the honour of making first talky in India to Kolhapur- (1932). At this juncture, Bhalji Pendharkar later acclaimed as the *Tapasvi* - an ascetic of film industry- joined Maharashtra Film Company as the director. Bhalji had an independent personality. But it should be remebered that both Bhalji and the Prabhat Company were blessed with the cultural and technical infrastructure of the film industry that Baburao had meticulously evolved in Kolhapur. Baburao firmly supported them and without his background they could not have the fame and glory that they did.

A glance at the names of artists such as Govindrao Tembe, Jaishankar Danve, Gopal Mandre (Chandrakant), Vishnupant Aundhkar, Keshavrao Date, Durga Khote, Hirabai Badodekar, Nanasaheb Phatak, Raja Paranjpe, Balgandharv, Hansa Vadkar, Jairam Shiledar whom Baburao directed for other companies after leaving Maharashtra Company gives an idea of the glorious tradition that he created in Marathi film industry.

After independence Tatya Ambapkar, Bal Gajbar, Vasantrao Painter(Anandrao Painter's son), Madhavrao Shinde, Dinkar D. Patil, Anant Mane – all fromKolhapur - enriched the tradition of Marathi cinema following in the footsteps of Bhalji Pendharkar and Master Vinayak. The artists from Kolhapur such as actors Chandrakant, Suryakant, Arun Sarnaik, Ramesh Dev, and actresses Sulochana, Leelatai Pendharkar, Baby Nanda, Asha Kale, Padma Chavan have brilliantly served the world of cinema. The likes of Master Vitthal and V.Shantaram have taken the name of Kolhapur at the national level. The theatrical talent of renowned playwright Vishnupant Aundhkar, poetic genius G.D. Madgulkar and musical acumen of great vocalist Sudhir Phadke have found their first expressions in this very city of Kolhapur. Moreover, the career

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of Lata Mangeshkar, today acclaimed throughout the world as the 'Empress of the Notations' had begun from this very land.

PAINTING

Kolhapur took a great leap forward in the art of painting during the period of Shahu Maharaja. In this field, the first salute of honour goes to *Kalatapasvi* Abalal Rahiman. During the reign of Regency Council, the Darbar of Kolhapur on a special scholarship as recommended by the British Resident sent him to the famous J.J. School of Art Bombay. There, Abalal created history with his artistic genius.

He was awarded the Viceroy's medal for the extraordinary genius in painting he displayed in one of his series of paintings-(1886). Renowned foreign painters visiting the institute acknowledged that his paintings were of international standard. Such an artist of outstanding genius was ascetic by nature. On returning to Kolhapur, he chose the scenic forest area of Kotitirth for his residence. There he lived like an ancient sage and devoted his life to the art of painting. He accomplished a dialogue with nature and expressed its various forms with his brush.[42]

On hearing the fame of this reclusive artist, Shahu invited him to the Darbar and honoured him. He was appointed as Darbar painter with a salary. However, the royal patronage did not change the bohemian nature of Abalal. Shahu, well aware of the genius in him, treated Abalal with great respect without putting him under any restrictions.

A reminiscence about Abalal is interesting: "....Many times Shahu would go in person to meet this great artist. Abalal was an impulsive genius. On receiving the news of the King's arrival, he usually stepped out to greet Shahu with a salute. On occasions, Abalal would be in the clouds and would not come out even on Shahu's arrival. Shahu never was annoyed . On such occasions, he used to enter the studio on his own to greet the veteran artist."[43] This King truly had an eye for the genius. He was not a mere dilettante but a virtuoso with a grace and elegence that befitted a genuine connoisseur. Naturally, he was never petty and showed magnanimity of heart in condoning the artist's whims. Abalal was not an exception. He treated most artists of all hues with genuine respect and warmth.

Occasionally Shahu would take Abalal along on hunting campaigns and then Abalal would engross in drawing pictures of horses, birds, wild animals and the hunt. He had drawn portraits of men and women belonging to the regal family and also of visiting foreign dignitaries. He had also drawn pictures of historical and *puranic* events. The number of his drawings goes above 15,000 to 20,000. (Unfortunately, only a few are available today)[44]

Evaluating accurately the artistic qualities of Abalal, the renowned art critic Baburao Sadvelkar has said, "....In fact there is no reason to bring forth the greatness of Abalal's qualities comparing him with other painters. The single "Ravaneshwar" , a small painting of the size 5" / 7" gives the complete experience of Sisle's romanticism, Turner's vision of space, mild movement of breeze experienced by Koro and structural unity achieved by Constable. Every stroke of brush seems to be making impression somewhere deep within and from it rises a rhythm, a soothing breeze starts moving around the body creating

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vibrations along its every part, pains of bliss become unbearable, mind refuses being stable and the vision gets trapped in a fantastic dream....."[45] Comparing Abalal with the great visual artists of not only India but of the world Sadvelkar continues, "If the outstanding qualities of Abalal are to be experienced, one should see his original drawings made in the year 1885-86. Especially the picture of a sage drawn with a red chalk (head-study). It reminds one of the pictures of Leonardo Da Vinci and Rafael. If someone is told that, a renowned artist of the world has drawn this picture he would have to believe it because of its qualities. Abalal has almost done alone the work normally a whole generation would be required to accomplish..... The freshness and weight of colours in his nature drawing is still intact. As a matter fact, Abalal must have possessed outstanding knowledge of technique and craft. For, his pictures, 40 to 50 years old, have not yet lost radiance (even though they were not properly preserved.), Even today they are good enough to throw connoisseurs in ecstacy."[46] What a stroke of fortune that such an artist existed in Kolhapur during the reign of Shahu !

During this period, Kolhapur was home to two more bohemian artists- Anandrao and Baburao Painter. Anandrao was intensely imaginative, intelligent and tenacious artist. He had painted the drapes of the sets of Keshavrao Bhonsle's Lalitkaladarsha Company with such skills that the beauty and illusion of reality they created history in theatre. Ananadrao's curtains would receive applause the same way the songs of Balgandharva-or Keshavrao would![47] Even today if one looks at the available photographs of his curtains, one is overwhelmed by Anandrao's miraculous artistry.[48] We have already noted that later on Anandrao painted rich drapes for Govindrao Tembe's *Shivraj Natak Mandali* and Balgandharva's *Gandharv Natak Mandali*.[49] The unfortunate premature death of Anandrao was a great loss to the art world of Kolhapur and India.

As stated earlier, Baburao Painter had not received formal training in any art institute; however, the quality of his art was such that it would astonish the famous painters trained in such institutes. When the posters of Baburao's films, which he himself had made hung all over Bombay, his fame reached Sir Gladstone Solomon, the Director of Sir J. J. School of Art. He was so impressed by the artistic quality of these posters that he invited Baburao to the institute and felicitated him.[50] Baburao made many picture drawings such as nature drawings, *Puranic* drawings, portraits etc. during his lifetime. He had accurate knowledge of the purity of colours as well as of mixing of them. The stroke of his brush expressed the effervescence of colours. This is not the place to write about it in detail; however, suffice it to note that he created a new school of his style in the field of painting. . The influence of this school brought to the fore renowned artists such as Baba Gajbar, Ganpatrao Vadangekar, Chandrakant Mandre, Bal Gajbar in Kolhapur in the period that followed.[51] Baburao was also a gifted sculptor. His sculptures that range from tender ivory carvings to huge metallic statues exist until this date adding to the beauty of Kolhapur.

During this period, two painters namely Raobahadur Madhavrao Dhurandar and Madhavrao Parandekar reached the pinnacle of fame in Bombay. The duo originally from Kolhapur, resided in Bombay and achieved national acclaim.

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Kolhapur gave one more talented artist, Vinayak Masoji who took his art to the National level. Masoji completed his art education in the Shantiniketan of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore where he became a favourite associate of the poet. He is the only Marathi artist who worked in Bengal style.[52] There are three famous artists who received direct encouragement and economic assistance from Shahu namely Baba Gajbar, Dattoba Dalvi and Madhavrao Bagal. Dalvi later on founded Dalvi's Art Institute, a school to provide training in art in Kolhapur while Madhavrao got engrossed in politics and social enterprise. That limited his artistic creativity. Nevertheless, his creations do no fail to give the experience of his characteristic qualities as an artist. In the post-Shahu period along with Dalvi, Bagal, Chandrakant Mandare, Ganpatrao Wadangekar, artists such as Jaisingrao Dalvi (son of Dattoba Dalvi), Shamkant Jadhav, Ganpatrao Majgaonkar, M.R. Deshmukh, Shivaji Sharma have contributed in enriching the artistic traditions of Kolhapur. In the field of sculpture Bal Chavan, Shamrao Dongersane, his sons Chandrakant and Shrikant, Ravindra Mistri (son of Baburao Painter) ably carried forward the tradition. Prabhakar Dongersane and Sanjay Tadsarkar are the two budding sculptors in Kolhapur today.

Prior to Shahu, Kolhapur was famous throughout India only as the residence of Goddess Mahalaxmi. During Shahu's reign, it became known for the enrichment of different arts. Kolhapur became famous as 'Kalapur' (abode of arts or city of arts)all over during this very period. This was an important event in the cultural life of this part of Maharashtra and at its fountain of inspiration was none other than the connoisseur and versatile, sensitive, magnanimous and the knowledgeable lover of arts, the King of Kolhapur State, Shahu Maharaja. It can be well said the era was a manifestation of the adage : *Raja Kalasya Karanam* - 'The king is responsible for his times'.

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30.

NON-BRAHMIN JOURNALS

In the period before Shahu, a few newspapers/journals had existed in Kolhapur. According to the available record, the first journal in the State began in 1853 in the form of a monthly *Dnyansanghraha* started by Nana Moroji Trilokekar. There followed the journal *Vartman Sanghraha* started by the Political Agent in the state, Col. Anderson in 1864 with the object of educating the people about the work of Darbar of Kolhapur. Later, many papers such as *Dnyansagar*, *Shubhvartmandarshak*, *Vidyavilas* etc came into existence. The *Vidyavilas* of Shankarshastri Gokhale was monthly to begin with, but after two years it became a weekly. After some more time it was transformed into a daily. The honour of being the first daily newspaper in the State goes to *Vidyavilas*.[1] Though the policy of the editor of *Vidyavilas* was the propagation of national freedom, it was at loggerheads with the Darbar as it had taken a stand that opposed social reforms during the Shahu era.

EARLIER JOURNALS OF SHAHU'S TIMES

Professor Vishnu Govind Vijapurkar was the first newspaperman of the Shahu era. On the occasion of the coronation of Shahu, he started the famous monthly *Granthmala* backed by profuse economic assistance from the new Chhatrpati. He performed a commendable task of creating love and awareness among Marathi readers about their own country, religion and language by publishing various articles and books related to subjects such as history, political science, medicine, agriculture, physics etc; however, he sided with the orthodox Brahmins in the *Vedokta* conflict owing to his orthodox and traditionalist disposition. In 1898, he started the weekly *Samarth* dedicated to nationalist education. During the *Vedokta* conflict, he launched bitter and strong attacks on the Chhatrapati himself in his two papers *Granthmala* and *Samarth*. As a result not only did he lose the royal patronage but also had to face the wrath of the Darbar. Nevertheless, he became quite popular among the Brahmins who approved of his journalism. Darbar had annulled the grant of *Granthmala* in 1901. Somehow, *Granthmala* survived until 1906. Later in 1909, Darbar asked guarantee from *Samarth*. Vijapurkar refused and closed down *Samarth*.[2]

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Meanwhile Vijapurkar had launched one more monthly called *Vishwavrutta* in 1906. In one of its issues of the year 1908, Pandit S. D. Satvalekar wrote an inflammatory article titled 'The Radiance of Vedic Prayer'. In that article Shahu was directly attacked in a statement which said, "Of what use to the nation is the regality and valour of those Kshatriyas who do not annihilate the enemy troops and slavery in the world?" The Darbar of Kolhapur accused that the whole article was defamatory of Shahu Maharaja and therefore, it amounted to treason. A suit was filed against Vijapurkar. In the court of law, he was sentenced to three years simple imprisonment.[3] Thus began Shahu's confrontation with the Brahminical newspapers; it continued until the end of his reign.

During Shahu's reign until 1912-13, it appears that various kinds of newspapers had come into existence in Kolhapur. Many of those were started with a religious objective. Among these the important were the *Mahapuran* and *Jainbodhak* of the Jains, *Veershaivmat Prakash* of the Lingayats, *Prakashak* of the Christians and *Dharmavichar* of the Vedics. Besides, various small newspapers started with an objective of either entertainment or education such as *Nanalahri, DnyanVilas, Kal, Aryamitra, Manovinod, Krishikarm* etc. were also being published during this period. Later some newspapers started with an objective of propagating Satyashodhak views among the masses. For example, some important newspapers of the Satyashodhak ideology were the *Maratha Dinbandhu* of Bhaskarrao Jadhav, *Garibanhca Kaivari* of Baburao Yadav, *Vijayi Maratha* of Bhujangrao Gaikwad.[4] All these people were associates of Shahu in his social work. It is obvious they would have received essential assistance and encouragement from him.

SHAHU'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO NON-BRAHMIN JOURNALS

However, Shahu turned towards the field of journals in the true sense after 1915-16. It was during this period that the class of orthodox Brahmins from not only the State but from whole of Maharashtra had stood in opposition to him because of the royal patronage he had offered to Satyashodhak and non-Brahmin movements and his experiments such as the abolition of Kulkarni *watan* that had dealt stern blows to Brahmin bureaucracy. This opposition became particularly strong and sharp when Shahu, opposing the Home Rule movement of Tilak, started a movement demanding representation to the backward classes in Legislative Councils to be formed under the Montford Reforms. To awaken the non- Brahmin classes in this regard, Shahu also began to attend the conferences of the backward castes and communities. The Brahminical newspapers in Maharashtra started vehemently attacking the social and political opinions of Shahu, the administration of his State and the Satyashodhak and non -Brahmin movements he had patronized. Moreover, some Brahminical newspapers started a campaign of Shahu's character assassination and vilification of members of the Royal family. On this backdrop, Shahu began to feel the need of non-Brahmin newspapers that would advance the stand of non-Brahmin society and awaken the masses against the Brahmin bureaucracy. Shahu knew well that newspapers were a powerful medium of social awakening as well as creating public opinion. He had now come to the conclusion that to repel the attacks of Brahminical newspapers it was essential to create a powerful weapon of non-Brahmin newspapers. As such, he goaded many a

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man from the non-Brahmin society to start newspapers; to those who had already taken initiative he provided profuse assistance and behind those who already had their newspapers, he stood in strong support.

In fact, Shahu had begun to encourage some educated non-Brahmins from his State to start newspapers from 1911 itself. In that year, Balwant Krishna Pisal had started the newspaper *Vishwabandhu* on Shahu's encouragement. *Vishwabandhu* would bitterly attack the monopoly of Brahmins and selfish politics of the Tilak Party. It invited the wrath of the Brahmin Rulers because of its stringent criticism.[5] In 1921 Shahu sent an issue of this paper to Robertson, Home Secretary of Bombay Government, and in an accompanying letter he had said, "...The editor of this paper is an ordinary person. However, he is always opposed to Tilak. As such, his paper is not doing well. I am going to help him."[6]

During this period, a journalist arrived into Pune who would use his pen more fiercely than Balvant Krishnaji Pisal. He was Dinkarrao Javalkar. The young and enthusiastic duo of Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar had successfully challenged the leadership of Lokmanya Tilak in Pune on behalf of the non-Brahmin party. They made courageous and vehement attacks on the Brahmin clique of Pune. Especially when Javalkar wrote a stinging play *Pranaya Prabhav* in support of the Vitthalbhai Patel's revolutionary bill advocating inter-caste marriage and the Government did not allow even the first show of this play because of its explosive content, the name of the young Javalkar made waves throughout Maharashtra. Shahu, was in in search of such dare devil masters of the pen. He spotted Javalkar, and brought him to Kolhapur and provided him all kinds of assistance to start an independent newspaper. Javalkar started his *Tarun Maratha* under Shahu's patronage-(1919). Once he had the weapon like newspaper at his command, Javalkar started launching fiery attacks on the Tilak party. Even the Brahmin Rulers were not spared. As Javalkar published inflammatory matter against the Ruler of Aundh, a complaint was lodged with the British Resident who took a serious note of it and demanded explanation from Shahu , the patron of Javalkar. Javalkar's pen was so bitter and at times so deadly for its targets that Shahu was unable to condone him and was left with no alternative but ask him to leave Kolhapur - (April 1921).[7]

There are examples galore of Shahu encouraging many people within and without his State to start newspapers by directly assisting them. In 1921 the paper *Shivchhatrapati* was started in Kolhapur by Keshavrao Bagde and Kirtivanrao Nimbalkar with Shahu's encouragement.[8] Some important newspapers behind whom Shahu stood with economic support were *Jagrook, Vijayi Maratha, Dinmitra, Mooknayak* and *Rashtraveer*.

The die-hard proponent of the principles of Satyashodhak Samaj and the dynamic leader of the non-Brahmin party Walchand Kothari, with great tenacity had started the paper *Jagrook* in Pune challenging Tilak's *Kesari*. Shahu admired the efforts of Kothari. A record of his assistance of Rs. 3,000 to Kothari is available in the State archives.[9] However, Kothari had been managing his paper independently. When the British Government ignored the issue of separate electorates to backward castes, he began vehement attacks criticizing the Government. Shahu did not like it. Also his efforts of including moderate Brahmins

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from the Congress and liberal Brahmin intellectuals elsewhere in the non-Brahmin movement were not appreciated by Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Latthe and others of the non Brahmin party. However, Kothari was not of the kind who would care for anybody's likes and dislikes. Nevertheless, he had the good sense and wisdom of respecting the word of Shahu.[10]

SHRIPATRAO SHINDE'S VIJAYI MARATHA

During this period, the non-Brahmin movement had the good fortune of availing the services of one more principled and fearless journalist, Shripatrao Shinde. The fiery activist of Satyashodhak Samaj from Kolhapur, who had prospered under the royal patronage of Shahu, decided to start a newspaper out of his concern for non-Brahmin masses and resigning the post of police sub-inspector, he plunged into the dangerous waters of journalism of his own accord. Shahu was opposed to the idea that a family man like Shripatrao should give up the cozy job and undertake the vexatious observance of journalism. When Shinde went to seek Shahu's blessings for his daring enterprise the King thundered, ".....Shripatrao, how did the ruinous idea of giving up a good job and starting a newspaper come into your head? You are under delusion that I would help you in launching a newspaper! But I am not going to help you with a single paisa. You immediately start for Indapur (the place of his job) and just forget about resignation!"[11] Shahu's words were out of concern that Shripatrao's family life should not suffer. However, Shripatrao was burning with resolve. He ignored Shahu's threat-cum-advice and raised necessary money from friends in the form of donations and loans. Jedhe brothers of Pune stepped forward to help him. On December 1, 1919, Shripatrao published the first issue of his *Vijayi Maratha* in Pune. At heart, Shahu had admired the young man's determination. When he saw *Vijayi Maratha* standing firm in the Brahmin citadel of Pune, he called Shripatrao, congratulated him and also started financial assistance to his paper.[12]

The period of the rise of *Vijayi Maratha* was the high noon of Tilak's political journey. His name was a rage all over the country. His ceaseless work for the national movement had created an aura around him. In these circumstances, Shripatrao had the courage to hurl a challenge before Tilak and his *Kesari* in the Brahminical den of Pune. He made his paper the mouthpiece of Satyashodhak Movement and non-Brahmin party. He brought about social awakening among non-Brahmin masses on many a social and political issue and performed the role of a social reformer. The writers of the book *'Marathi Vrittapatrancha Itihas'* (the History of Marathi Journals) while evaluating the work of Shripatrao have said, "Shripatrao's oratory was strong, but no less effective was his pen. His writings would be in a simple language and style that would be understood and appreciated by his readers. Though it lacked scholarship, it contained practical attitude and was full of concern. However, his devotion to principles was stronger. That was how his writings exuded great confidence. Shripatrao bravely confronted the giant of a leader Tilak on issues of equality and social reforms. Shripatrao's stand on issues such as intercaste marriage, women's education, the statue of Jotiba (Phule) was reasonable one; *Kesari*'s position appears to be improper. It should be said about Shripatrao that he was an upright editor of principles who was obsessed by the interests of the masses and would fight till the end....in the history of Marathi journalism, the paper *Vijayi*

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Maratha and the journalistic contribution of its editor Shripatrao Shinde is unforgettable and illustrates a different path in this field."[13] The achievements of Shipatrao were a sweet fruit of the efforts Shahu had taken over two decades for the deliverance of the masses. Shripatrao did the great work of disseminating the thoughts of Mahatma Phule and Shahu Maharaja among the non-Brahmin masses.

MUKUNDRAO PATIL'S DINMITRA

Shahu provided similar support to the paper *Dinmitra* of Mukundrao Patil, a great activist of Satyashodhak movement and its proponent. Mukundrao was blessed with the rich tradition of his biological father, the associate of Mahatma Phule, Krishnaji Pandurang Bhalekar, and the latter's Satyashodhak journal *Dinbandhu*. But Mukundrao was obliged to publish his paper *Dinmitra*, from a small village Somthane in Ahmednagar District under most trying circumstances. Mukundrao who had taken the Brahmin autocracy by horns had to face the rigors of many an intrigue hatched by orthodox Brahmins. From 1910 he had been fighting like a lone warrior from the fortress of *Dinmitra* against all odds like the noose of debtors, Government warrants for confiscation and the terrorist acts of his enemies. In 1920, circumstances worsened so much that his fortress faced near annihilation. During these critical times Shahu came to Mukundrao's rescue. His assistance gave a new lease of life to *Dinmitra*. The paper was shifted to village Taravade from Somthane in the same district of Ahmednagar.[14] In this respect a comment made by *Vijayi Maratha* in 1922 is worth a glance: "..... At a time when the printing press of *Dinmitra* was mortgaged and the paper *Dinmitra* was about to die, Baburao Yadav provided it with the requisite finance from Shahu Maharaja and settled it on the rocks of Taravade lifting it from the sand dunes at Somthane."[15]

Mukundrao was grateful to Shahu for his assistance in critical times; however, he did not give up his principles under the pressure of mounting debts. He firmly believed that the foremost devotion of an hardcore journalist should be to his principles. Therefore, when the Maharaja publicly declared that he was not a Satyashodhak and later created a seat of *Kshatrajagadguru*, the principled journalist in Mukundrao came into action whose pen did not waver while sternly criticizing Shahu himself. He did attack the Brahmin class with his sharp writings; but he also seldom spared the Marathas and Maratha sardars when it came to dealing with their follies. They too had to bear the attacks of his pen. While honouring his upright journalism, the *Subodh Patrika* of the Prarthana Samaj has said, " ...To publish a weekly from a village on time, to build a workforce and maintain one's character without tilling the paper with frivolity is not an easy task.....the thought of becoming the protégé of local officers the village has never touched Mukundrao. He did not ever sell his freedom of thought to any one and used his pen on the side of truth against even the nearest persons."[16]

Mukundrao was not a highly educated scholar. In fact, his formal education had not reached beyond primary standard II. But he had a rare literary talent. He was born with the qualities of yearning for public good and the urge to struggle against injustice. The foremost proponent of Tilak cult Sahityasamrat N. C. Kelkar was furious when he read Mukundrao's *Kulkarni Leelamrut*. But so far as the literary qualities of Mukundrao's writing were concerned, Kelkar had nothing but high praise.

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While extending help to Mukundrao in Ahmednagar, Shahu was simultaneously encouraging two educated young men, Shamrao Bhonsle and Shamrao Desai of Belgaum, the southernmost tip of Maharashtra, to start a newspaper for the propagation of Satyashodhak principles. On Shahu's motivation the two started the paper *Rashtraveer* in the May of 1921. Belgaum was an important center in Maharashtra standing on the threshold of social awakening. *Rashtraveer* performed the important task of strengthening the Satyashodhak movement and awakening the masses in Belgaum. Shamrao Desai ably rendered the responsibility of editorship of *Rashtraveer* for quite a long time. He was among that selected lot of principled non-Brahmin journalists who spent their entire life for the cause of social awakening. Through the medium of *Rashtraveer*, he propagated the views of Phule and Shahu in southern Maharashtra for a period of more than three decades.

MOOKNAYAK, DECCAN RAYAT ETC.

During this period an important event took place in the field of Marathi journalism. The newspaper *Mooknayak*, that fought for the rights of the depressed classes, was launched under the guidance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Before that in 1919, a meeting between Shahu and Ambedkar had taken place. Shahu was pleased that a highly educated leader was on the rise among the untouchables and when Babasaheb and his associates put the idea of a journal fully dedicated to the betterment of the untouchable community before him, he provided them an assistance of Rs. 2,500. Encouraged by this, Dr. Ambedkar published the first issue of *Mooknayak* on January 31, 1920. .*Mooknayak* was intended to lead and voice the grievances of untouchables who for centuries had remained dumb against high-caste oppression. In the very first issue, Dr. Ambedkar wrote, " ....There is no other means as a newspaper to take measures against the injustices our ostracized people are suffering and will suffer in the future and to discuss their betterment and ways to achieve it.....the issues facing the ostracized community are regularly discussed in papers such as *Dinmitra, Jagrook, Deccan Rayat, Vijayi Maratha, Dnyanprakash, Subodh Patrika* etc. However, where the issues of castes that come under the wide umbrella of non-Brahmin castes are discussed, it is obvious that enough space would not be available to discuss the problems of the ostracized communities in detail. Anybody will agree that a separate journal is necessary to discuss their extremely dire conditions and related problems. This journal is born to fill this void."[17] However soon Dr.Ambedkar had to leave for England to complete his higher studies. *Mooknayak* could not survive for long without his guidance.

The leaders of the non-Brahmin party had started an English newspaper, the *Deccan Rayat*, to advance their stand before the educated society and the Government in 1918. On its Directors Board were persons such as Latthe and Kothare who were active in the movement. *Deccan Rayat* would receive assistance from Shahu. However, it became problematic to run the paper and the directors decided to close it down in 1920. In a letter to Shahu dated June 20, 1920, Latthe writes, " .....With the closure of *Deccan Rayat*, it has become difficult to put forth the stand of our party before the class who knows only English. This is a big setback to our work. However, vehement English weeklys such as the *Marratha* too are not able to stand on their own. It is no wonder then that the number

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of readers subscribing to know our opinions cannot go beyond fifty. Under such circumstances, it is clear that all the expenses of *Deccan Rayat* would fall upon our purse. It is not possible for me to bear these expenses and it would be improper to seek the generosity of His Highness on a permanent basis."[18] However, Shahu did not like the closure of the journal. He sent a cheque of Rs. 4,000 to Latthe. On its support, Deccan Rayat survived for some more time. But eventually, it did shut down.[19]

In Shahu's era, Kolhapur was the main centre of non-Brahmin movement. From there Shahu would remain in touch with the many activists and non-Brahmin newspapers spread all over Maharashtra. Among these were many non-Brahmin journalists right from Bhagwantrao Palekar, the editor of *Jagruti* at Baroda to Kashirao Deshmukh, the editor of *Subodhmala* at Amravati. Deshmukh was an enthusiastic Satyashodhak activist. He would undertake Satyashodhak programmes such as *Vedokta Shravni* in the region of Vidarbha with great élan. On August 24, 1921, he requests the Maharaja, "I have a small printing press of treadel machine adequate for my monthly. I am extremely grateful to Maharaja for the kind communication of his desire to have 'big news paper of the non Brahmin party in Varhad; we will provide the necessary finance'. I too wish the same. However, I do not have a press big enough to publish a newspaper. Therefore, it is not possible to efficiently run a newspaper regularly. I do not think it proper to run a newspaper lackadaisically and I do not have the means to buy a press required for a newspaper. However I will deliberate over the detail and soon put forth my plan to consideration of Maharaja."[20]

SHAHU'S HELP TO BRAHMIN JOURNALS

Shahu also time and again helped Brahmin news magazines the way he helped non-Brahmin ones. The two important among these were the *Sudharak* of Agarkar and the *Sandesh* of Achyutrao Kolhatkar. The supporters of Agarkar had tenaciously continued with *Sudharak* after his demise in 1895. However, over a period, it got into economic crisis. In 1906, it lay on the deathbed. Shahu had respect for Agarkar equal to other liberal Brahmin leaders like Justice Ranade and Gokhale. Especially, he had not forgotten the lonely battle *Sudharak* had fought against the orthodox Brahmin class. Shahu's biography records that when he came to know that *Sudharak* was in financial crisis he sent aid to Vinayak Ramchandra Joshi the then editor of *Sudharak*.[21]

An evidence speaks of a similar aid by Shahu to the crisis ridden *Sandesh* of Achyutrao Kolhatkar. Kolhatkar in fact was a Tilak devotee. However, in 1919-20 he dared to criticize Lokmanya himself in his *Sandesh* on the issue of Tilak fund. As a result, he not only antagonized Tilak devotees but also the popularity of *Sandesh* eroded and with its sales plummetting landed in the whirlwind of financial crisis. The news regarding Tilak fund would regularly come to Shahu. According to him, the affairs brought to fore by *Sandesh* were related to public money and as such, the journal had done a commendable job.[22] He thought it necessary to support the journalist who had the courage to stand against the Tilak party and sent an amount of Rs. 4,000 to Kolhatkar through an intermediary. The Maharaja had obviously considered this loan to be a bad debt. This time Kolhatkar responded positively saying that he was on Shahu's side and

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would publish whatever matter Darbar would send him.[23]

Shahu does not appear to have taken disadvantage of *Sandesh's* troubles. Rather when Kolhatkar began to advance the just stance of Shahu and non- Brahmin party without caring how the Brahmin clique would react, Shahu wrote him, "....You justify my stance in your newspaper. By doing so, you are gaining unpopularity among your people. As such I think that henceforth if you do not write articles justifying me, it would be good for your popularity" - (3 June 1921).[24] After some days *Sandesh* began criticizing Shahu upon which he sent a message through the intermediary with whom he had passed on money to Kolhatkar saying, " ....destroy the promissory note in your custody! Otherwise we might desire payment against that note in order to take revenge. Let us eliminate the possibility of such evil thought taking root in our mind!"[25] These words of Shahu show his magnanimity and willingness to help the editor of *Sandesh* without expecting returns.

ATTACKS ON SHAHU

Except the newspapers mentioned above, almost all Brahmincal newspapers in Maharashtra were against Shahu. They continued to attack the administration of Kolhapur and the Satyashodhak/non-Brahmin movement he led. Shahu was mature enough to understand that if a social movement was to be organized such blows were inevitable. He was prepared to face the assault. However, he expected that the criticism should be in the context of principles and thoughts and not personal. But, some Brahmin newspapers had crossed the ethical limits of journalism and had begun to savage not only Shahu but also the ladies of the royal family in extremely venomous and obscene language. Amongst such newspapers, *Lokshahi* of V. V. Hadap, who later acquired fame as a novelist, *Loksangraha* of Ramkrishna Paradkar, and *Rajkaran* of Sitaram Damle were on the forefront.[26]

After the confiscation of the Kulkarni Watans, the entire Brahmin class in Maharashtra had gone against Shahu. In addition, his support to the Satyashodhak and non-Brahmin movements and his leading these movements from behind the curtains had only aggrevated the fire of Brahmin hatred towards him. Shahu stoically suffered the heat. The deplorable criticism of the royal family had hurt him the most. That was the price he had to pay for his dedication to social service. In a letter dated December 21, 1920 to his queen he writes, "...You know what the issue of *Loksangraha* dated 20th December has published in its article 'The Veiled Kshatriya Women of Kolhapur.' You might as well remember that Dr. Kurtkoti had made a similar poisonous assault on Akkasaheb a few days ago. The Brahmincal newspapers have reached limits in defaming our dynasty. As my loyal wife, you must remove your Brahmin priests from the Palace and get done all your religious rituals from Kshatriya priests. Do not falter a bit from this decision"[27]

The non-Brahmin newspapers were engaged in the job of vehemently repelling the assaults on Shahu aimed from British territories. The British Government had conveniently adopted a policy of neutrality. Shahu felt that actually it was the duty of the Sovereign Government to protect the Indian Princes from such newspapers engaged in character assassination. The most ridiculous part was that the counter attacks the non Brahmin newspapers launched against Brahminical newspapers

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would stir the Government into restlessness. Only then its sense of justice would awaken![28] In a letter to a friend describing how a Prince in the whole affair suffers, Shahu writes, "...The objective of the regulations in vogue in India regarding the press is to protect the subjects in the British territories. However as the editors know that they (regulations) do not offer protection to the extremely loyal Princes or their officers, they are criticizing the Princes with relish and as this crime is non-extraditable, the Princes are helpless about it. If a case is filed in British courts, it becomes extremely cumbersome and costly to send the officers and witnesses inside the British areas. However, a Prince like me would enjoy the procedure in British territories but I could not leave the state for so long a period. I would not even care for this, but the dirt (to be cleaned) sometimes sticks to the body. The way to get out of this mess is the permission to fight cases in the Residency Courts."[29] Shahu's stand that a facility to ensue proceedings against culprits from British India in Residency Courts, if made available would be just and helpful towards the Indian Princes. However, why should the foreign Sovereign Government bother if an Indian Ruler was thrashed directly this way?

Shahu knew the power newspapers wielded in politics and social enterprise of the country. That was why he subscribed to all Marathi and English newspapers. He would be very watchful about the news and articles about him, Kolhapur administration and the national movement. Daily cuttings of the relevant matter would be filed every day and the file would be sent to Diwan Sabnis for his consideration. These files would be preserved in the palace library for references. The Maharaja had appointed Raobahadur Mahadevrao Dongre as Newspaper Inspector to do this job-(7 June, 1920).[30]

It should be noted that despite Shahu's assistance and despite their ideological support to him, many non-Brahmin newspapers and their owners had not given up their freedom of thought entirely. Among these papers, *Vishwabandhu, Dinmitra, Jagruti, Jagrook, Vijayi Maratha* and *Prabodhan* appear to have criticized the policies of Shahu lightly or severely as and when the circumstances so demanded. In October 1920, some overenthusiastic Satyashodhaks created a much hue and cry by forcibly getting the Goddess worshipped in the 'Ambabai' temple of Kolhapur. Shahu apprehended them and put them in the lock up. When the news reached Prabhodhankar Thackeray, he criticized Shahu as 'The Ringworm of Ambabai' in his journal *Prabhodhan*! Thackeray writes in his autobiography, "...Many people thought that Shahu Maharaja would neither call me nor meet me henceforth. But what a surprise! The next week His Highness was waiting in his car below the Malbar Hill Shiri Road when I returned from my office. The chauffer spotted me and took me to the car saying 'the Mahaarja wants to see you'. 'Sit in the car,' ordered Shahu. I got in and we arrived at the Panhala Lodge. Maharaja ordered that no one be sent in. We settled and Maharaja asked the first question, ' Well, old man, how naughty you have become'? I asked 'how?' That led to a long discussion on that article. He said, 'Everything cannot be achieved all of a sudden. I am going to take care of everything, but gradually.' He revealed nothing more. But he made it clear that he had not taken the criticism to heart' "[31]

Shahu had a high level of tolerance and would not mind just criticism from his own people. The editor of *Rashtraveer* Shamrao

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Desai says, "....The Maharaja provided economic assistance to launch non-Brahmin newspapers. However, he never dictated any policy for these papers while doing so. Moreover, even when the paper *Rashtraveer*, born out of Shahu's generosity, criticized him, Shahu never showed his displeasure even once. It means that he never mortgaged the wisdom of the editors in lieu of money. He would cheerfully take the criticism of papers under his own patronage."[32]

HONOURING THE FREEDOM OF JOURNALISTS

Shahu honoured the freedom of journalists; he also jealously guarded his own freedom of thought. . In 1920, he sent a letter for publication to Kothari, the editor of *Jagrook*. In it he had said, "I have helped many newspapers. However, I am not responsible for the articles published and opinions expressed in these journals. If these papers are not writing against me by chance, it is their obligation on me. When I start a newspaper of my own only then the responsibility of articles and opinions expressed in it would devolve upon me. Generally, there are as many opinions as the people. In the same way, I might have my own opinions that I am not ready to express before people. For, it is not fair to express opinions without experience. Those who know about my independent opinions must not follow them because those are mine. However, if they treat these opinions as their own they are free to follow. This is my request to all."[33]

Thus it was that Shahu honoured the principle that each individual was entitled to his own opinion. However, he honestly felt that the difference of opinion among the non-Brahmin newspapers should not cross limits thereby impairing the social movement they had undertaken. Therefore, in 1919-20 when a fierce debate commenced between *Jagrook* and *Vijayi Maratha* on whether non-Brahmins should avail assistance of Moderate Brahmins, he felt that it could cause harm to the non-Brahmin movement. Shahu intervened and asked the warring parties to throw their swords. Both the journalists of fighting disposition honoured his words. In a letter to Latthe Shahu says, "I was concerned what turn the discord between *Jagrook* and *Vijayi Maratha* would take. I had begun efforts to end the disagreement and it is something to rejoice that the editors of both the journals have decided to end the strife.....I positively request all our journals that they should work hand in hand with a common purpose." - (25 September 1920)[34]

ADVICE TO NON-BRAHMIN JOURNALS

Shahu felt the non-Brahmin newspapers should avoid fighting amongst each other and save energy to protect the comprehensive interests of the movement for deliverance of non-Brahmin communities. He also thought that such infighting provided amunition to the enemy. Comprehensively elaborating this opinion, Shahu writes to Bhagwantrao Palekar, editor of *Jagruti* : "When you came to Kolhapur, you planned to write about every department of the Baroda State. I had said then that it would cause harm to the State of Baroda, the Maratha caste and the Maratha party; but I had to be brief for lack of time. Though N. C. Kelkar belonged to the Liberal Party and Tilak was an orthodox, *Kesari* never wrote against Tilak. The Brahmin Papers such as *Loksangraha, Rajkaran, Kesari* never write against Brahmin Rulers. Then why should Papers such as *Jagruti, Vijayi Maratha* write against Gaikwad or other Maratha Rulers? If the Maratha Papers start writing against our

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party, they would be in the opposition. How could the party then sympathize or assist such Papers? Secondly, to write against a department, the person must be an expert in that department. For example, an experienced engineer is necessary to write about the engineering department while a sanitary officer is a must to write on the sanitary department. Our criticism should be such that it could not be criticized in return. Do we have such experts? From where can the editor of *Jagruti* fetch them? It is never proper to write against one's master or the party. In that case, myself, Khaserao, Sampatrao Nimbalkar, Shirgaonkar and Vanikar who help *Jagruti*, would become Sayajirao's foe. Things achieved by love cannot be achieved by scorn.What could be done by asserting friendly right could not by being aloof. It does not behove our dignity to criticize the departments of the Maharaja of Baroda or defame him; nor would heaping scorn on him or calling him names advance the cause of reforms, our cherished goal. If your master, the Maharaja of Baroda, or your Party commit mistakes, you would do better to admonish them in person or through a letter. You argue with them and express your opinions. As all these are the signs of love, your objective would be fulfilled. However, publicizing the negative aspects of your master and the party in the paper would be tantamount to giving a weapon to the enemies and that would be a loathsome act....in Western countries newspapers are regarded as potent weapons to reform the king and the nation. However, this is not the case in India. For, in India there is no self-government, no single caste, single religion, and single party. As such, the newspapers should not imitate their Western counterparts. In India, the Princes are responsible to the British Government for good governance. They cannot placate any party, as there are many castes and religions. How could they appease any single party? Our journalists should write articles taking into consideration these circumstances"- (February 5, 1922).[35]

Thus Shahu advised non-Brahmin journals that they should not pull their party's legs publicly criticizing their own people. Though his proposition was not in keeping with the fundamental principles of parity and impartiality of journalism, it was practically more useful for the interests of the movement. Basically, Shahu had nurtured the non-Brahmin newspapers to strengthen the non-Brahmin party. If these complexities are considered, Shahu's proposition becomes but a rule of organizational discipline of the movement. He wanted it to be followed for the success of the movement. No one except Shahu in Maharshtra had the moral right to ask the non-Brahmin papers to follow such rules. Most of non-Brahmin journalists had accepted his right of their own accord. In this way, the monopoly of Brahmins that existed in the field of journalism at the start of 20th century was broken by the end of Shahu's reign and big and small non-Brahmin journals began to show over Maharashtra giving voice to the vast majority. Historically, it would be appropriate to give credit of this pro-societal change in journalism to Shahu Maharaja than anyone else.

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31.

THE CONSPIRACIES

Social reforms in India is a mission or *tapasya* in Indian parlance, far harsher a penance than walking on a razor's edge. This *tapasya* is undertaken not for self-gratification or acquiring name; it is a selfless mission for amelioration of the society as a whole. The path of social workers is vexatious. Their entire endeavor is against the established traditional norms and this endeavour hurts the members of the established classes who rule over and exploit the weaker sections of society. Most of the times the reformer has to resign to the enmity of these people and continue his march. The history of the past hundred odd years of Maharashtra and the lives of the great reformers of Maharashtra are evidence to this grave and bitter historical fact. No reformer has proved to be an exception to it, be it Mahatma Phule from the so-called lowly class or Principal Agarkar who belonged to the so-called higher class. All of them have been witnesses to their cherished values of life being carried away in funeral processions by their enemies. Moreover, they had to endure the most ferocious assaults of the traditionalists. Some reformers had to bear these blows below the belt. When the attacks degenerate into obscene vilification, the mission becomes more demanding of the reformer. It is like carrying fire in your hand.

THE FIRST ONSLAUGHT

Shahu Maharaja had to face many onslaughts made below belt. The first instance is of around 1901. During the *Vedokta* storm, he was accused of having molested in his palace a beautiful girl from a well to do family named Jirge. The enemies of Shahu created such an outcry over the matter that the father of the girl committed suicide. The issue became more complicated and was utilized astutely by his enemies. They had now a spicy story to circulate and a toxic weapon to destroy Shahu's character. Gravity of the charge obliged the British Government eventually to investigate. The overnment found out that the allegation was totally unfounded. Actually when this episode was alleged to have occurred, Shahu was not in his Palace in Kolhapur but at the Sontali (Rajputwadi camp) outside Kolhapur. The enemies were not concerned with that. They had fabricated the conspiracy taking for granted Shahu's presence in the New Palace in Kolhapur.[1]

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History sometimes repeats itself in a miraculous way. The repetition is not often of incident or of person but of spirit or temper. A similar conspiracy 225 years before had tried to malign Crown Prince Sambhaji , son of Shivaji the Great, the founder of the dynasty to which Shahu belonged. Here again, Sambhaji's enemies had hatched a conspiracy to defame him and thus deny his right to the throne. The enemies fabricated stories of his love affairs. A story that was spread to the effect that Sambhaji went to meet the daughter of a Brahmin minister every night and that Shivaji had ordered that if he did not give up the affair he should be flung from atop the mountain peak without hesitation, was a fabricated one. The calumny reached the British factories too.

Sambhaji's character assassination continued with more calumnies being manufactured even after his death. A story fabricated 125 years after his death contained a much more vile charge. On Fort Raigad during the women's *kumkum* ceremony of Shitlagauri, Sambhaji carried away with force a beautiful Brahmin girl and raped her in one of the rooms of the palace, the story alleged. The fabricator tells us that when Shivaji Maharaja came to know of it, he was extremely furious and to escape his wrath which would culminate in a very severe punishment, Sambhaji fled to enemy Dilerkhan's camp! In fact, when the incident allegedly took place as per the conspirators' vile imagination, Sambhaji was stationed at Sangemeshwar in southern Konkan and not at Raigad! He joined the camp of Dilerkhan from Sajjangadh and not from Raigad. However, this fabricator had nothing to do with real history. His sole aim was to defame the Prince.[2]

Chhatrapati Sambhaji's character assassination continued both during and after his life. So was the fate of his descendent, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja, whose enemies tried hard to malign him during and after his reign. The only difference was that Sambhaj was first the Crown Prince who later became the Chhatrapati, the Sovereign of an independent Marathi nation whereas Shahu Chhatrapati was the head of vassal State of the British Empire, constrained under many political restrictions. However, both had fallen prey to the wicked elements in society. Both had to suffer mental anguish because of the noble tasks they had undertaken.

THE SECOND ONSLAUGHT

Shahu's enemies attacked him for the second time in 1906. This attack was made on a mixed social and political background: the humiliating defeat of the Brahmin caucus of Kolhapur in the *Vedokta* episode, violent activities of Brahmin terrorists, and the stern measures applied by Shahu to end terrorism in his State. By the middle of 1906, the enemies of Shahu in Kolhapur sent letters to the Government of Bombay requesting an investigation of the charge that Shahu by force had molested three women. Some of these letters were anonymous while some under fake names. Similarly, an application-cum-letter was sent to the Lady Minto, the wife of the Viceroy at Calcutta, under the name of the Brahmin women of Kolhapur. The effort obviously was a crooked plot of gaining the womanly sympathy of Lady Minto by bringing to her notice that an Indian Prince had endangered the modesty of women in his State and a plea that rightful action (by deposing him) be taken against him. As the issue had reached not only the Bombay Government but also the Court of Viceroy,

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the British Government took notice of it and started investigation. The political representative of the British Government in Kolhapur, Col. Ferris was ordered to investigate the matter. Col, Ferris met Shahu and asked for his explanation about the accusation. Shahu sent his explanation in writing. As this letter is important to understand his moral stand, the necessary part of it is reproduced here :

Kolhapur.

7th August, 1906.

My Dear Col. Ferris,

Regarding the talk we had about the three women it is my sincere desire that though the letter is only anonymous, you should kindly go to the bottom of the matter. It is of course beyond doubt that it is the work of my enemies. Such letters, I know, always go to Government; but they have never asked us any question, nor have they been ever so particular as they seemed to be on this occasion. Even though Kakamaster made an application to the government under his own signature making similar charges against me still the govt. did not, it seems, think much about it. But in as much as they have asked, now it appears, they have some doubt that the story might be true. I do not at all wish that it might be so. I have, therefore, to request you kindly to make searching enquires into the matter. I am not one of those who think that such enquiry will take away my *abru**. You know Prof. Vijapurkar, Rashingkar, Tilak and the editor of the native newspaper who are my enemies and I do not mind it even they are allowed to help the inquiry. If you do not wish to have an inquiry, you might ask them privately about the truth. You can even privately or publicly ask the guardians of the women...So it is desirable that to clear the character of the all concerned and to put some more life into the investigation of the present case, the inquiry into these charges be made. If my enemies Tilak and his party, whom I have mentioned above say, that my absence is necessary for the purpose, I should not mind going away for some time for a trip. But my only request is that after all inquiries the charges should prove quite unfounded, the persons who made the charges of the Tilak's party should be dealt with according to their deserts.

I challenge any of the above-mentioned people who, I think, are at the bottom of it to prove the charges not in these three cases alone but in any case they choose from my birth to this day.

Yours very sincerely,

Sd/

Shahu Chhatrapati

P.S.: I would not mind if you keep this letter on the file as I think that this letter contains all that I have to say in the matter...[3]

In the above letter, Shahu had cleared the following points while advancing his position; 1. Even if the enemies have charged him in anonymous letters, the charges should be duly investigated.2. He does not think that such investigation would harm his prestige. 3. He does not object if the aid of the members of the opposite party such as Vjapurkar, Rashingkar, Tilak etc is taken; in case the government is not interested in such inquiry they might be asked for inputs in private. 4. The guardians of the three women related to whom the charges are made be asked in private or public about the episode.5. If Tilak and his party

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members thought his absence is essential during the course of the inquiry he is ready for it. 6. If the charges are proved unfounded after the inquiry the members of the Tilak party who have made the charges should be punished. 7. Finally, it is a challenge to these people that they prove not only this but also any other such act that he has perpetrated in his life.

Shahu's letter is written in so obvious, transparent, and forceful words that it does not need much comments. The language of the letter though restrained, is direct and challenging. The faith in principles of truth and justice on the side of Shahu has been fully expressed in the letter.

Even though Shahu had referred to Tialk as an enemy in the letter his allusion is to the members of the Tilak party in Kolhapur. It is true that as a result of the *Vedokta* and Tai Maharaj episodes the relations between Tilak and Shahu were not only constrained but had become that of open enmity. Also it was true that Tilak had supported the Brahmin caucus and the Brahmin terrorists of Kolhapur. Especially in the March of this very year (1906), he had visited Kolhapur and advised the people to start a popular movement demanding their participation in the administration of the State. Accordingly, the Brahmin leaders in Kolhapur had started attempts to set up 'Pratinidhi Sabha' (assembly of people's representatives). In this manner the Brahmins had planned to start a new front against Shahu in the name of democracy. However this does not mean that Shahu's enemies in Kolhapur took all decisions on Tilak's advice. It does not seem possible that the people vilifying Shahu had done this job on instigation of Tilak; for, it was impossible that a great leader like him would support such an abhorrent act. He was definitely at loggerheads with Shahu; but that hostility was in the realm of ideas and not personal. The conflict between the two was a matter of open challenges and counter challenges. It did not have place for assaults below the belt.

EVEN TILAK WAS NOT SPARED

Such an incidence of character assassination had occurred in the life of Tilak as well during the course of proceedings in court in the Tai Maharaj episode. Tilak's enemies had advanced a forged letter before the court that made a serious charge against him thus: "Tilak raped Tai Maharaj during his stay in Aurangabad." Moreover, they had cast such a spell over a refined woman like Tai Maharaj that deposed before the court in their favour! Tilak's biographer Kelkar says, "When Tilak returned home after the deposition he seethed with fury; no one had seen him so angry before. He only said that 'even a prostitute does not tolerate damage to her dignity of her own accord; she tries to veil it. However if a woman from a respectable family for no reason falsely accepts injury to her modesty, let she be deplored!".[4] We can only imagine the mental agony of an upright person like Tilak at his character assassination. Shahu had suffered the same anguish. The only difference was that Lokmanya had to face only one such poisonous barb, whereas the enemies of Shahu had fabricated many such stories. His enemies continued their work of character assassination until the end of his life.

Tilak's enemies who intended to defame him and throw him out of public life were from Pune, his home town. Lokmanya has called them *Paji Panchak* (the five scoundrels). They influenced Tai

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Maharaj and Nagpurkar (her trustee) and in tandem with the cunning British officer Aston, hatched the conspiracy of defamation. Writing on this episode, Tilak wrote in an editorial in *Kesari*, "....But when Tai Maharaj fell in the hands of Aston and Aston in the hands of the Government, things did not remain entirely in the hands of Tai Maharaj or Nagpurkar. They tried to do something and something different happened. They had to do the job of lighting the canons that the Government had prepared and filled with false ammunition."[5] Though the lower court sentenced Tilak in the Tai Maharaj case, the High Court acquitted him. This was a difficult time in the life of Lokmanya . But he emerged out of it like gold from fire, his strong moral character shining as ever. Tilak exclaimed, "Truth has stronger foundations than sword".[6]

Shahu too had faith in truth. The moral courage of facing public inquiry in this vile charge came out of this conviction. As the letters accusing Shahu were anonymous, even the British Government did not dare to conduct a public inquiry. However, the Political Agent in Kolhapur was ordered to conduct a probe and send a report to Bombay. The report was extremely confidential. In it Col. Ferris had clearly mentioned, "I am sure as it is possible to be, that His Highness leads a clean life. I believe he had a mistress upto last year, but she died; he had never been a promiscuous fornicator."[7] Col. Ferris' report which vouched for Shahu's clean character and ascertained he had never led an unrestrained promiscuous life was first sent to the Government of Bombay, then to the Viceroy at Calcutta and finally to the Secretary of State for India in England. The Government accepted it and did not inquire further. The proceedings against Lokmanya were publicly conducted and he was acquitted publicly. Shahu had no advantage of a public inquiry. His innocence remained a secret in the files of Government documents. He had taken the thrashing with his mouth shut. This was his helplessness as an Indian vassal Prince.

BELVI'S IRRESPONSIBLE ATTACK

Meanwhile the *Lokpratinidhi Sabha* referred to earlier had come into existence. Most of its members were Brahmins with people such as Professor Vijapurkar, Rashingkar, Aaltekar, Abhyankar, Gokhale at the helm. The first and the last meeting of the *Sabha* was held in October 1906. One of the members said in the meeting, "Every man and woman of Kolhapur is concerned day and night with the safety of property, life and natural rights."[8] This type of propaganda started appearing in Brahminical newspapers also. A methodic campaign to malign Shahu in Maharashtra was underway. Shahu's biographer Keer says, "...The Brahminical newspapers propagated and spread the slogan that every man and woman in Kolhapur was anxious for his or her safety. The propagation that the Brahmin and non-Brahmin women were frightened was wicked and utterly false. The non-Brahmin class had kept aloof from the iniquitous movement of character assassination of Shahu. Truly this was a Brahminical movement and its target was Kolhapur and Kagal."[9]

The campaign of the Tilak party and Brahmin newspapers to defame Shahu continued intermittently until the end. Especially after Shahu confiscated the Kulkarni watans in 1918, the members of the Bramin brigade went wild with frenzy.

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The Brahmins began to think of Shahu as their born enemy. In meetings arranged to condemn Shahu and in their newspapers the Brahmin brigade opened even more poisonous onslaughts on Shahu and his family. False stories, gossip, and rumors were astutely propagated incessantly so that the people of Maharashtra should think that in Kolhapur life and dignity of no one were safe. The Kulkarnis were annoyed by the beginning of 1920 as the Government of Bombay had overruled their application. On this background, the leader of the Tilak party from Belgaum, Dattopant Belvi, speaking in the Kulkarni Convention held at Sankeshwar in 1920 said, " In Kolhapur no body's wife is safe nor is anybody's life or property!"[10] The vulgar utterance of Belvi was condemned in public meetings by the non-Brahmin people all over Maharashtra. The non-Brahmin newspapers launched a counter offensive against this irresponsible attack by the Tilak party. Further the moderate newspaper of Bombay, *Induprakash*, registering its protest, said, "This caustic speech of Belvi would hurt, and annoy every person in Maharashtra. Until date many have disparaged Kolhapur, but no assault was as thoughtless as Belvi's. The sprinkles of disparagement that Belvi has speckled on the Darbar are based on hearsay information. Not only are they false but also motivated by wickedness. He has twisted the truth. By charging the Kolhapur Darbar in this fashion he has defamed himself."[11]

What was Shahu's reaction at a time when Maharashtra was thrown in a tumultous frenzy over the Belvi episode? In a letter to Political Agent Wodhouse he writes, ".....as the amelioration of the backward classes is my objective, my proposition that they should give up the arrogant yoke of Brahmins and rid themselves of their mental slavery and authority is just. Therefore, to avenge me and to instigate people to murder me the Brahmin activists are viciously attacking me. They are speaking and writing against me recklessly in order to create hatred in peoples' minds and anarchy in the State."[12]

The campaign did not end with Shahu's death. His enemies kept circulating the defamatory stories in the society with added flavour. The members of Tilak party were in the forefront. Lokmanya was opposed to reformers and reformation whereas the extremists in his party were hostile to the reformers. That reminds us of the aggressive stance the declining monarchies of Europe had adopted once the democratic values began to rise and spread and challenged the absolute monarchies after the French Revolution. During that period, a class arose which cherished monarchy and it is said that it was more royalist than the king himself. In the same fashion, a class arose in Maharashtra during the time of Tilak and after his death. This class upheld only the orthodox ideas of Tilak, was hostile to reformers such as Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati and their progressive thoughts and pretended to be more Tilakite than Tilak himself. These Tilak loyalists had brought Lokmanya into trouble many times during his lifetime and helped the final decline of the Tilak party after his death in a similar fashion as the royalists in Europe had brought about the downfall of the monarchies by putting them into trouble.

PHULE ATTACKED BY THE TILAKITES

As an instance, the unfortunate episode of Mahatma Phule's statue that occurred

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in the Municipality of Pune in 1925 can be cited. This was the time when the Brahmin-non-Brahmin antagonism was at its fiercest in Pune. Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar, the young duo of the non-Brahmin party had published a fiery book *Deshache Dushman* (enemies of the country)) targeting the deities of the Tilak party, Chiplunkar and Tilak and created an uproar. In answer, a booklet named *Satyashodhak ka Khristsevak* (Satyashodhak or the servant of Christ) that assaulted the Godlike icon of non- Brahmins, Mahatma Jotiba Phule, written by a staunch Tilakite Ganpatrao Nalavde, was published by the Tilak party. The members of the Tilak party had won over to their camp some people from non-Brahmin communities to give a moral strength to their stance. Some among these were Ganpatrao Nalavde, Vishwanathrao Phule and Baburao Phule (these two were the grandsons of the paternal cousins of Jotiba). The members of the Tilak party had adopted a cunning policy of befriending not only non - Brahmin people but also the relatives of Jotiba phule to aim shots at opponents from behind their backs. They had successfully converted many non-Brahmin members in the Pune Municipality to their side on the issue of the statue.

In his booklet Ganpatrao Nalavde had not only made false accusations against Phule - that he was a paid propagandist of the Christians against Hindu religion- but displayed the audacity of tarnishing the unblemished character of the Mahatma. This booklet was distributed to members in the special meeting called to discuss a resolution proposed by Keshavrao Jedhe to raise a statue of Mahatma Phule in his honour. Brahmin and non-Brahmin members, who had joined the Brahmins, opposed and overthrew the resolution. At this time a person named Rangoba Ladkat said, "Tilak loved the non-Brahmins very much. Phule is no match for him"; whereas Baburao Phule regretted, "...We are ashamed that such a religious apostate was born in the Phule family." The Tilak party was content as the resolution was overthrown with the help of the non-Brahmin members.[13] This was a war against time. Though the Tilakites had won a battle, as is evidenced by history, they had finally lost the war that was a sum total of many battles.

While discussing the vicious conspiracies of his enemies to defame Shahu, some parallel instances in the life of Tilak and Phule are purposely cited here to make a point that great men often have to face such machinations. In case of Phule, the fire of vengeance against him had not extinguished decades after his death. Shahu's predicament was not exceptional. Even if it were so, he had to go through a excruciating mental anguish owing to the malignant rumors his enemies had spread about his character. And when the enemy began targeting his family, the anguish turned into a torture. Shahu endured the anguish and torment with unusual fortitude in order to complete the grand mission he had undertaken. When this becomes clear, the respect one feels for him increases manifold.

PRIVATE LIFE OF SHAHU

It will not be out of context to write a few words about the private life of Shahu. Biographers such as Dr. Y. D. Phadke have discussed the sex life of Maharaja in their works and all have advanced a realistic picture.

When Guru Fraser got to know about the *Garbhadan* ritual for Shahu who was 18

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years of age on the very threshold of youth with the Queen who was 12 years, he advised his disciple to be cautious. With a view to their sound married life and healthy progeny, Fraser asked Shahu not to consummate the marriage till the queen came of age. This episode has been referred to earlier. Shahu had followed the restriction and given the proof of his self-restraint. It should be specially noted that his self restraint and self denial was admired by the Council of Administration of the State by passing a special resolution to that effect.[14]

Eventually, the couple begot four children. The already delicate health of the Queen deteriorated further because of childbirths. Shahu could not get the expected satisfaction from her. The near and dear ones to Shahu insisted that he should marry again when they got the inclination of his situation. Shahu flatly rejected the idea as he knew well how such marriages destroyed family peace and well being owing to increasing jealousies and power struggles. Family doctor Tengshe advised that Shahu, in order to ensure good health of the Queen, should accept a mistress. While the topic was discussed in the Palace, someone brought before him a beautiful girl of tender age who belonged to a good but poor family and was willing to be his mistress. Shahu was touched looking at her age and instead of accepting her as mistress, got her married to one of his young officers.[15] Later, Shahu for physical needs, chose elderly women from courtesans' families as mistresses. About 5 to 6 women of this kind had come into his life one after another as is narrated by his biographers. Any one who knows this brief narrative of the personal life of Shahu cannot charge him with lasciviousness. Many of Shahu's contemporary Indian princes maintained harems of hundreds of beautiful women. Most aristocrats and even Deshmukhs and Patils of villages had more than one wife and as many mistresses depending on their economic prosperity. Moreover, this habit was regarded as prestigious too. In this ambience, if a prince like Shahu lived with a single wife and only as a physical inevitability maintained a mistress or two, there was no reason to regard this as moral decrepitude. But the enemies made mountain out of a mole-hill and fabricated many stories of defamation.

While studying the life of Shahu, a realistic and practical approach that he too was a man of flesh and blood and not a recluse should be adopted. To understand his greatness or to evaluate his contribution in the social makeup of Maharashtra and country it is not essential to consider his personal life as a criterion. Dr. Phadke has made instructive comments on this subject. He says, "....In fact, the customary perception that the derivation of sexual pleasure from more than one woman brings blemish to one's greatness or his achievements is a fundamental misconception. The great men who create history are also human beings of flesh and blood. Many people forget that the expectation that every great man must be a reclusive hermit unconcerned with the carnal pleasures is basically wrong. Under these circumstances, the enemies of the rulers of India and other respectable individuals move around fabricating false but interesting stories about these peoples' sexual life. The opponents always play the game of character assassination of the revered people in order to denigrate them in public esteem."[16] Dr. Phadke's comments should mark the appropriate end of this topic. With this perspective, the

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conclusion is clear: the stories fabricated to defame Shahu by his opponents were but a game to blemish the character of a person who was venerable to the vast majority of *bahujan* masses of Maharashtra. No wonder then that the demise of this Messiah of the downtrodden triggered contradictory reactions. The *bahujan* masses shed tears of blood in heart-felt mourning; in some cities like Bombay, Satara and Vasai, his enemies were so euphoric with joy that they distributed sweets on the streets and thankfully worshipped the Lord Satyanarayana to give vent to the venom in their hearts.[17]

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32.

END OF AN ERA

Shahu Chhatrapati was a visionary genius blessed with towering personality and mighty physical prowess. He glowed with health and intense energy creating many legends about his extra-ordinary feats of physical strength and courage. However, in the course of time his many preoccupations with the affairs of the state as a conscientious ruler, his struggles with the British authorities on the one hand and the painful war against the entrenched social orthodoxy of the day on the other, had begun taking toll of his health. He suffered from heart ailment and diabetes. Loss of his beloved younger son Prince Shivaji in an accident in June 1918 dealt a grievous emotional blow to him. Shivaji was handsome and bright prince. He was survived by wife Indumati who was just 12-year old at the time of his tragic death. The Maharaja's heart cried for his widowed daughter-in-law. The shock was so traumatic that Shahu began losing interest in things material. He abandoned his palace and started living an austere life in an ashram-like camp at Sontali at the foot of Jotiba Hills and on the banks of Panchaganga River. He now fully devoted his life to the welfare of downtrodden and backward classes.

VICIOUS ATTACKS OF BRAHMIN BUREAUCRACY

The spirited and radical administrative measures Shahu adapted for upliftment of all socially and economically backward people in the last few years had further piqued the orthodox Brahmin bureaucracy which redoubled its vicious attacks against him, particularly when he abolished the Kulkarni *watan* in July 1918.

Shahu was cruelly lambasted by almost all the Brahmin newspapers in British India. True, attacks on administration and policies of Shahu by the newspaper *Kesari* were within the framework of public morality. But some of the journals started maligning not only the Maharaja but also the members of his royal family. The intensity of the calumnous campaign increased with each welfare measure taken by Shahu. The newspapers being in British India, Shahu and many other Princes treated similarly felt helpless. Only the British authorities could take action against this press. Many Princes had begun demanding protection from the British against such malignant character assassination by the native press.

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Shahu Chhatrapati called on the Viceroy Lord Reeding at Simla in September 1921 to press the issue. Expressing his concern during the meeting Shahu said, "....The criticism in the newspapers not only lacks the norms of sophistication, but it is also unjust. It is not a pure criticism, but a case of defamy. In such a situation the Princes cannot approach the law courts of British India as no Prince with self-esteem would like to stand in the witness box of these courts".[1] Despite strident pleas from the Princes, the British Government never looked into this matter seriously which was a misfortune of the Princes and especially of Shahu.

While facing these unkind cuts externally, Shahu was also fighting against his physical ailments. Both mental and physical health having been disturbed, Shahu began losing interest in life. In 1920 he wrote a letter to a friend expressing his feeling that he would not live more than 5 to 6 years.[2] Destiny was more forthcoming. It snatched him away much before in 1922.

THE LAST EVENTFUL DAYS

The year 1921, however, was quite eventful for ailing Shahu. In January he visited his friend Governor Lord Willingdon at Madras. He attended the inaugural function of the Chamber of Princes at Delhi in February and participated in its proceedings. Later, he looked forward to the Shivaji Memorial in Pune in November when the Prince of Wales was to lay the foundation stone to commemorate bravery of Maratha soldiers who died in the First World War. The Maharaja's intention to raise a memorial for Shivaji was a brilliant idea, a statesman's vision. He would achieve a number of positive socio-political and cultural objectives by making the British Prince lay the foundation for the memorial of one extra-ordinary icon of Indian freedom accepted by all segments of the society not only in Maharashtra but across India.

Shahu called on several British officers in succession to discuss the proposal of the Shivaji Memorial with them and called on the Governor of Bombay in August to press the issue. He went to Shimla in September to call on the Viceroy to convince him how honoring the great Maratha freedom fighter would assuage the feelings of the people. On the return journey, he stopped over in Delhi to attend a meeting of the Chamber of Princes where he again discussed the matter with the Viceroy. At one stage, the idea of the foundation ceremony of the memorial was almost dropped. Most probably it was Shahu's lobbying and his argument that the memorial would be in the best interest of the British Government that seemed to have convinced the Viceroy. Shahu had even threatened to resign from the reception committee of the Prince of Wales' visit if the Prince was not to attend the foundation ceremony. Ultimately, the Viceroy gave in to his demand.[3]

Shahu planned a large conference of the Patils in Maharashtra to follow the foundation laying of the Shivaji Memorial. Thus the presence of thousands of turban-clad Watandar Patils gave a colourful social backdrop to the grand ceremony in Pune when the British Prince laid the foundation stone of the Shivaji Memorial on November 19, 1921. The Prince paid glowing tributes to the memory of Shivaji. Shahu requested the Prince to accompany him to move around the huge rapturous gathering. The people, glad to set their eyes on the Prince and Shahu from close quarters, gave a rousing ovation to the two. The ceremony became successful both from the point of

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view of attendance and its objectives beyond expectation. Everyone including the Governor credited Shahu for its success and appreciated his services to his countrymen.

The travels across the country, the hectic negotiations, organization of the two close events and their execution involved great exertions on part of Shahu and his health declined. He was treated by Dr. Wanless, his friend and well-known physician of Miraj Mission Hospital. But his health did not improve much. His travels, visits and meetings continued as usual.

On February 6, 1922, Shahu inaugurated a lake built by Bapusaheb in his Jahagir at Murgud. Here it was that Shahu predicted that a sugar factory would come up in the region soon.[4] The factory indeed came up later as predicted by Shahu. The ceaseless travels continued with Delhi as the next destination where he went with Bapusaheb to participate in the royal felicitation to the Prince of Wales. There in Delhi he received the sad news of the death of his sister-in-law, Bapusaheb's wife. He could not return to Kolhapur for the last rituals as he was held up in the organisation of felicitation ceremony. In his letter to Viceroy's secretary Mr. Thomson on February 11, he expressed his grief saying that had it not been for the imperative call of duty of paying respects to the Prince of Wales, he would not have stayed in Delhi even for a second; because his sister-in-law was no less than a mother to him. He writes further, "This function is the last duty in my life. I am not sure I will last long".[5]

Thus Shahu had the premonition of impending death. However, this did not dim his enthusiastic welfare activities. He desired intensely to spend his life till the last breath for his people. In Delhi he had a meeting with reputed jurist Frank Biman for a discussion on codification of Hindu Code based fundamentally on the principle of equality before law for all his subjects. Shahu handed over to him the responsibility to draft the code. During his stay at Delhi Shahu accepted the invitation to preside over 'All India conference of Untouchables', a large gathering of 30,000 people. At the conference, he hailed Dr. Ambedkar, then in England, as their great natural leader and asked them to follow his example - (February 16, 1922).

At the end of February, Shahu had a meeting with the Viceroy and discussed with him the issue of adoption of a heir to Ichalkaranji Jahagir. He also travelled to Kurukshetra for hunting and happened to meet there Mahatma Gandhi.[7] The two towering personalities in their meeting must have discussed more of social issues than those of politics.

That Shahu was terribly upset by the attacks of the Brahmin newspapers on him and his family, was clearly evident from his letter to Mr. Thomson in his last days. He writes, "The Chitpawans (Brahmins) and their movement in Maharashtra have nothing but hatred for me, I am sure now, that I will not be able to live in peace in Maharashtra." He also suggested to Mr. Thomson that Viceroy should take initiative in preparing a plan for protecting Indian Princes from such defamatory attacks.[8]

Rajaram College at Kolhapur was a well-known educational institution in southern Maharashtra. It was under the jurisdiction of Bombay University but had not received permanent recognition from the University. Shahu, therefore, on his way back from Delhi halted at Bombay and made efforts with the mediation of Sir Chimanlal Setalwad and Maharaja

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Sayajirao Gaikwad. In one of his letters to the Maharaja, he said that Rajaram College was the only institution in Maharashtra that provided opportunities to the Marathas and other backward classes to acquire higher education. He was not immediately successful in his endeavour. And so having returned to Kolhapur he again traveled back to Bombay and continued his efforts which this time bore fruit and finally Rajaram College received permanent affiliation to the University and also received permission to start Honours Courses.[9] This was Shahu Chhatrapti's last contribution to the cause of welfare of backward classes.

THE LAST JOURNEY

On April 30, 1922, the wedding of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad's grand daughter Laxmidevi (daughter of Prince Fatesinghrao and Rani Padmawati) with the Raja of Sawantwadi was to be held at Baroda. Shahu was obliged to attend as Laxmidevi had been a parentless child and her mother, on her deathbed, had sought promise from him that he would look after her daughter. Hence, Shahu disregarded his doctors' advice and on April 20, he left Kolhapur for Baroda with the bridegroom's party from Sawantwadi. This was to be Kolhpaur's last farewell to its Maharaja. No one seemed to have realized this.

The wedding of Princess Laxmidevi was celebrated with great pomp and regal grandeur. Shahu was much exhausted by attending the various rituals and functions during the wedding programme which again had a telling effect on his already declining health. An Elephant Sport (Sathmari) was organized on the next day of the marriage, which Shahu attended. As the game progressed, an excited elephant rushed twice towards a platform where Shahu stood. His life was threatened but was saved the extra-ordinary skill of the Sathmar in controlling the pachyderm. Shahu, greatly pleased, immediately announced a prize of Rs. 1000/- to him for his bravery - (May 1).

The next day, the Maharaja went out of Baroda for cheetah hunting, his favourite sport. The exertion only exacerbated his fatigue. Thoroughly exhausted and suffering from pains he left Baroda on May 3 and reached Bombay at his bungalow Panhala Lodge next morning. His heart problem had aggravated. Eminent doctors from Bombay were called who tried to revive his sinking health. But the condition worsened, severe heart pains made him restless and he could clearly foresee the approaching death.

Even in these conditions Shahu had invited the famous non - Brahmin journalist and thinker Keshavrao Thackeray for a discussion. In the evening May 5, he took a promise from Thackeray that he would complete writing the biography of Pratapsingh Maharaja of Satara, a victim of the Brahmin bureaucracy. Shahu was surrounded by his own people from Kolhapur such as Bapusaheb, Appasaheb Kagalkar and Indumati Ranisaheb. The pains increased and his breathing became uneasy.

Thus at 6 in the morning of May 6, 1922,this saviour of the downtrodden and the great soul of Maharashtra left for his heavenly abode. The Maharaja had been expecting death for some time and when the time came he embraced it fearlessly.

His earthly remains were brought to mourning Kolhapur via Poona and Satara. On the way thousands of wailing people bowed down before their great king with

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trearful eyes. His funeral procession started in the midnight of May 6th in the royal tradition. It was preceded by the announcement of a new Chhatrapati by installing his son Rajaram on the throne of Kolhapur.

The funeral procession reached the crematory of Royal House on the banks of Panchanganga at the dawn of 7th May. The last rites were performed in Vedic tradition by the students of Shivaji Vedic School, an institution founded by Shahu himself, The final salute of 48 guns was offered to Maharaja as the last mournful ritual was finished.

HOMAGE TO RAJARSHI

Maharashtra had never had such a great, accomplished, courageous, visionary and heroic king since Shivaji the Great in the 17th century. Had he been born in the 18th century Maharashtra he could have spread the light of freedom through the length and breadth of the sub-continent. Such was his potential that he would surely have fulfilled Shivaji's dream of the Maratha Empire.

The backward classes and their leaders not only of Maharashtra but those outside Maharashtra were greatly shocked by the sudden demise of Shahu. Many condolence meetings all over the country were held to pay homage to the great king. Special articles and editorials were published to pay homage to him and appreciate his yeoman service of the backward classes and the downtrodden. Sir Thyagraja Chettiar, leader of the non - Brahmin movement in Madras Presidency, said that though Shahu was directly the descendant of Shivaji, he was 'a democrat' of the democrats who loved the backward communities. He further added that Shahu was the source of inspiration to the non-Brahmin movement and the backward classes in India and that his objective had been to raise the non-Brahmin movement to the national level.[12]

The *Justice*, the mouthpiece of the non - Brahmin movement is Madras, paid a glowing homage : "Shahu was a prince among men and a man among the princes. His magnetic figure, his robust optimism, the iron will of which he was a master, his kindly and generous disposition, marked him out as a true Maratha of the best and noblest type. Born in another era, he would have founded an empire and created a confederacy."[13]

The *Kesari*, the mouthpiece of Tilak Party that always opposed Shahu's ideology, said, "In matters of physical strength, Shahu had special gift from Providence. Probably there was no other ruler in the whole of India who could be compared with him in this respect...The power of his intellect were similarly great and there is no doubt that if he had been born in older times, the organizing skill which was the peculiarity of his intellect would have enabled him to accomplish what would have given him a historic fame". The *Kesari* further added that none else in the present times had probably moved the soil of the land so deeply as Shahu by driving the plough of his crooked intellect into religion, politics and sociology with all the authority at his hand.[14] The use of term "the plough of crooked intellect" clearly brought forth the fact that even after Shahu's death, the Tilakites were not ready to forsake the feeling of enmity.

The reference of the condolence letter sent by Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the backward class, is already been cited before. Another leader, Ganesh Akaji Gavai described Shahu as 'the God of the

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Untouchables' and 'Our Abraham Lincon'. Many other Satyashodhak journalists, such as *'Jagrutikar'* Bhagwantrao Palekar, *'Vijayimarathakar'* Shripatrao Shinde, *'Prabodhankar'* Keshavrao Thackeray, *'Rashtraveerkar'*; Shamarao Desai praised high Shahu's great social work in their editorials.

In the British camp, many British political officials from the Viceroy to the Resident as well as the friends of Maharaja had expressed extreme grief over his death and paid rich tributes to his memory. But the most important tribute was paid by Fraser, his teacher and best friend. In his letter of condolence to the new Chhatrapati Rajaram he wrote, "The longer you live, the more you will appreciate what a rare character was that of your father. Faced by many difficulties throughout his rule His Highness met them all with a courage and high principle which never failed. He showed his love for his people, not merely as some do by words, but by life-long endeavour to uplift the weak at whatever cost to himself. He was a true man, strong, but with a tender heart for all suffering and no son could have a fitter example before him to guide him in the heavy task of ruling a state like Kolhapur."

The predictions of Fraser have come true today. Even after almost nine decades, the fame and glory of Shahu Chhatrapati as the saviour of the downtrodden and the backward classes inspires people all over the country. Chhatrapati Shahu is hailed as a great social revolutionary of India.

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33.

PERSONALITY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

His biographers have maintained that Shahu had a grand and radiant personality found but rarely in hundred thousands.[1] In fact he was so outstanding a man that it would not be an exaggeration if he were to be referred to as one in a million! Many great writers and poets of his times have described in their memoirs how they found Shahu Maharaja.

A MAN OF MASSIVE PHYSLCAL PROWESS

Renowned writer and journalist G. T. Madkholkar had seen Shahu many times. He says, " ....I haven't seen before nor later a huge, radiant and forceful man as described in our *puranic* books."[2] The other person who had keenly observed Maharaja was the great actor Baburao Pendharkar. His father worked as a government doctor at Panhala and was in good books of Shahu. Baburao had grown up as a child around the palace. In his autobiography, he has drawn a beautiful portrait of the man in lucid words. He says, "....Shahu Maharaja was coarse in looks but physically strong and mentally tough. He was six feet three inches tall and proportionately broad. Like his huge brawny physique, his nature was also generous and genial. He was a bit taciturn with shades of moodiness and impishness. Because of dark complexion, massive figure and piercing eyes his personality would stand apart among thousands. A stranger would hesitate going closer. His voice was big and thunderous like the rumble of clouds. He was extremely fond of hunting and wrestling. He had enormous strength in his body. He had no equal in horse riding and hunting. He would easily draw alone the draw-well usually drawn by four bulls. He would like to take on the beasts physically one to one and then hunt them. He never shot an animal unawares. He was equally an expert in spear throw as he was in shooting. Therefore, he would hunt with gun or spear according to the circumstances. During the hunting campaigns, he would mix with the peasants and workers as a rule. He would eat their *bhakar* and assemble the youth in the palestra to have wrestling bouts with them. He cautiously remained aloof from British outfits, sports, and customs. His living was simple. He would wear a long loose shirt of muslin, a simple trouser or a lungi, and a saffron turban and sit in a simple horse cart that he called *'Khadkhada'*. His food habits too

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were simple. A seasoning of garlic would convert any menu into a delicacy for him. He was fond of *bhakri (coarse chapati of jowar)* and *pithala* made of onions. Occasionally he would go for non-vegetarian food. But he never ever touched alcohol."[3]

Shahu was one of those people whom the nature had endowed with massive physical prowess. The stories of his mighty feats of muscle power are narrated in the neighborhood of Kolhapur even today.. Some are recorded in his biographies. The stories portray him horse- riding the distance between Kolhapur and Mahabaleshwar non stop in his prime youth, holding a motor fully throttled with his arms, carrying on his shoulders stout horses to safety from the burning stable, fighting a violent tiger with bare hands and then strangulating him to death, lifting calmly a notorious unruly wrestler by his *langh* and throwing him out of the arena, facing a two-hour surgery of tonsils without the aid of anesthesia and so on. These stories depict his mystical physical strength.[4] His contemporaries appear astonished at his physical prowess.

AN EXTRAORDINARY COURAGE TOO

Along with such extraordinary physical strength, Shahu was blessed with unusual courage. While commenting on the achievements of Chhatrapati Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji the Great, the renowned historian Setu Madhavrao Pagdi says, "....All other qualities in man rest in the shadow of courage. If a man lacks courage, the other qualities are worthless."[5] Sambhaji had fought many a battle and proven this attribute. Shahu's times were different and the techniques of war had changed. Nevertheless, the incidents of hunting in his life, manly sports such as *sathmari* do not fail to exhibit his extraordinary courage. He accomplished many a hunt of wild boars and tigers quite bravely. Many times, he had to fight with wild beasts unarmed and alone. The residents in the vicinity even today narrate succulently the bout that Shahu fought with a ferocious she-bear that had brutally attacked him in the jungle of Radhanagri. In the ring of *sathmari* in Baroda when he saw that the *sathmar*, the fighter was about to be trampled under the feet of the elephant, Shahu leaped off his seat, jumped in front of the elephant and bursting into a wild roar, saved the *sathmar*. Many such true stories of his courage are found in his biography.[6]

Hunting was not the only area in which Shahu's courage manifested. It showed in his confrontation with his enemies throughout his career irrespective of whether the enemy was the supercilious Brahmindom, the terrorists baying for his blood or the masters of the art of cunning—the Imperialist British. The movement of upliftment of the *bahujan* masses he shaped, caught between the racially arrogant Brahmins on one side and the British bureaucracy representing the British Paramountcy on the other, was a result of not only his attributes such as alertness, foresight, diplomacy but also courage. The mental strength essential to tread on the razor's edge while running such movements generates courage. Shahu possessed this strength in abundance.

VIEWS ON EDUCATION, SUPERSTITIONS & MARATHI

Shahu wanted to be with the common folk, carry it along, and bring about its betterment in the process. In this task, he

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was helped by his faith in God as well as the religion. Though he had admired the Arya Samaj openly, he had not renounced idol worship. He would seek with devotion the blessings of the deities in the State. He would visit the *dargahs* of Muslims as well as the temples of Hindus. He would daily perform Pooja of the image of Lord Shiva tattooed on his hand. He would devoutely perform the religious rites which were a tradition in the Palace and the State. The fairs and festivals of the deities in the state such as the Mahalaxmi, Tulja Bhavani, Temblai, Jotiba etc. were celebrated with regal pomp. He believed that such performance was his duty towards the subjects as the King. He would not falter in their performance. Shahu was also an admirer of the Western culture. He was of the opinion that Indians should follow many an attribute characteristic of the Western people. But he was certainly against the tendency to give up Indian cultural traditions and blindly follow the Western path. In those days, it was a common practice to appoint European governesses to look after the education of royal offspring. The governess would train princes and the princesses in Western education and culture. Shahu believed that if simultaneously training in Indian education and Indian culture was not imparted, the children would grow up into ridiculing their own culture, religion, and countrymen and this, he felt, was the most dangerous consequence of Western education. Shahu himself was trained in both the systems of education and he experienced how helpful it was practically. He firmly believed that such training in both the systems was essential for not only the sons of Indian Princes but also their daughters; rather it was more essential for the daughters. When the marriage of Shahu's niece with the son of the Prince of Akkalkot was being mediated by Mr. Bonus, the collector of Solapur, Shahu wrote a letter to him expressing his views on the issue of girls' education. He says, ".....Please, excuse me for saying what I consider to be safe education for our girls. Education solely under a European governess cannot give them an idea as to how they should behave towards their relations who may be their elders, equals or juniors; and especially amongst us where there is a joint family system the matter has to be carefully looked into. All our religious concerns are left solely to the ladies of the family and their ignorance of such matter will make them disliked for it....Our native family education, with the addition of English education, with the help of a governess for some hours is, I think, the best. The native system of educating and the custom of early marriage enable our girls to easily mould themselves according to the wishes of their husbands. The instances of the Ranis of Baroda, Gondal etc. prove this.... The education of my niece should be such that in case of an accident she might without difficulty be (absorbed easily if) married into a very orthodox family or a reformed family".[7] He felt that the women of his family after having married into other families should make themselves dear to their new in-laws irrespective of whether the new relations were orthodox or modern and for that, it was essential for the girls to have the fundamental knowledge of the customs, rituals and religious traditions of the family. These observations of Shahu display his practical intelligence.

Shahu was not superstitious even if he believed in religion, rather the positive tenets and values of religion. A person loses his religion if he crosses the sea was one

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superstition so firmly believed by the elite Indian communities that even the fact that the white people had crossed thousands of miles of oceanic expanse to arrive in India and shackled us into slavery had proved useless to make the Indians comprehend the hollowness of their belief. When Shahu returned from England in 1902, the orthodox Brahmins issued an edict asking him to perform expiation for having broken the ban on crossing the *Sindhu* (Sea) if he had to take Darshan of Goddesses Mahalaxmi. What's more, some traditionalists among the Maratha community seconded the brahminical edict. However, the majority of the Marathas stood by Shahu who overruled the religious edict of the Brahmins and took the Deity's Darshan. It was not an ordinary act then. In those times, many an influential people otherwise, had to follow the brahmincal dictates. Even the great men like the Maharaja of Baroda and Lokmanya Tilak were not excused.[8] In view of this orthodox ambience which prevailed, one has to acknowledge that Shahu's rejection of this edict was strikingly courageous.

Within eight days after he reached England, the internationally acclaimed University of Cambridge felicitated him conferring on him the degree of LLD in a special ceremony to honour his concern in the field of education and culture.[9] Two days later he visited the ancient town of Winchester along with the stalwarts such as the Maharaja of Gwailor, Agakhan and Sir Jamshetji Jijibhoy. Winchester is famous in history as the capital of the Saxons. A grand ceremony to welcome these Indian guests was arranged in the Winchester College. The welcome address was delivered not in English but in Latin. In a way, the people of Winchester had displayed their pride in their ancient language and culture. The perceptive Shahu realized this fact and delivered his address in Marathi in spite of his command over chaste English. William Lee- Warner, a friend of Shahu's father was with the retenue. Being conversant in Marathi, he translated Shahu's address in English for the audience.[10] The Englishmen expressed their respect for their ancient tongue whereas Shahu displayed to the successors of the Saxons his pride in his mother tongue, the language of Dynandev and Tukaram.

PHILOSOPHER PRINCE OF PLATO'S IMAGINATION

Gokhale, Sabnis and Fraser who schooled Shahu were accomplished teachers and scholars. As such, his foundations in learning were strong. He had a scholarly interest in many disciplines including English literature, Social Sciences and Philosophy. An occasional visitor would find Shahu boorish and illiterate. Prabodhankar Thackeray has said that whenever the white collared people who flaunted their learning would come to meet Shahu he would behave like a bucolic illiterate and talk a rustic tongue. Only those scholars who engaged in intellectual and philosophical discussions with him experienced the intellectual brilliance of the scholarly person who lay hidden behind the rough façade. Prabodhankar was one such intellectual and scholarly journalist. He has narrated an incident of one of his meetings with Shahu which lucidly illuminates this aspect. He says. "…..He asked what I was writing then. When I said, *Bhikshukshahiche Band*- the revolt of the mendicants- he asked me the titles of reference books. I told him

Shahu: Don't you have 'Priestcraft and Kingcraft' by Savel? That needs to be

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studied first. As like the clergy, even the monarchy has proved baneful for humanity.

I: You too fall in the same category !

Shahu : Of course, I do. Do you think that the monarchies of today are immortal? As it is, we are hanging by the thread of the good graces of the British. The thread is bound to sever, either today or tomorrow. Anyway, do one thing. Study thoroughly the books in the R. P.A. Series of America. 'Ingersol's Writings and Speeches' is a must. No one should talk about social reforms without reading Ingersol.

Shahu kept on suggesting many reference books and gave a sermon on their contents. At that moment for the first time I was enlightened about the treasure of knowledge he possessed. What's more, he reproduced before me paragraphs from many a book from the memory. On the face of it, though Shahu appeared rustic and illiterate, people just could not normally fathom his inner self, especially his comprehensive knowledge. Today I came to know about it and I was startled. Almost for half an hour he spoke absorbed; I listened equally absorbed."[11]

Tophkhane has narrated a similar experience of discovering a profound scholar in Shahu. Professor Athavle was one of the associates of Mahatma Gandhi in his *Ashram*. He was a transcendental scholar of Sanskrit. When he visited Kolhapur, Tophkhane arranged his meeting with Shahu. The meet proved to be a prolonged one in which the two engaged in serous discussions on many a topic. Prof. Athavle was impressed by the discussion and the studious nature of Shahu that manifested in the discussion. He wrote a letter to Tophkhane after returning to Wardha. He says, "....Through you I came in contact with a Maharaja who, in every sense of that great title, is a genuine Maharaja, one who can stand the test of the Philosopher Prince of Plato's imagination."[12] What else could be more honourable in the field of learning to a king than a scholar associate of Mahatma Gandhi finding in his personality the ideal king as imagined by the great philosopher Plato?

SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTALISM

Along with the scholarship of a variety of subjects Shahu possessed an insatiable spirit of enquiry. The spirit of experimentalism supported it. Shahu not only got himself illuminated about what the science of homeopathy was all about, but he also established India's one of the first public Hospitals of Homoeopathy in Kolhapur. During his European visit, he did not watch the arenas and theatres of Rome only as ancient tourist sights, but built their counterparts in Kolhapur. He came across the dams in Europe and undertook a massive project such as the dam at Radhanagari. He started new ventures in various fields such as agriculture, commerce, industry etc. He undertook various enterprises such as breeding of elephants in the forests of the State, the plantations of Tea-Coffee and rubber on the mountain slopes, honey bee culture, the production of various perfumes. He performed experiments to create high breeds by crossing the various breeds of domestic animals. His experimental nature is also evident in social contexts. The appointment of the *watani* teachers, building of separate hostels for different castes, the creation of Maratha Purohits and Kshatra Jagadguru in the field of religion, can be cited as the remarkable examples of his experimental nature.

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Special note should be taken of the experiments Shahu performed as regards the wild animals. In one of his addresses he had said, "....Love adds to love and hatred adds to hatred. If the beasts are treated with love they in return love the master."[13] These words of Shahu were not empty sermons but his comprehension of the world through direct experience. While he was in Delhi, he came to know that a tigress in a circus had gone wild and had killed her protector. He got the tigress from the owner and brought it to Kolhapur. He started experiments to domesticate her. The experiments were so successful that the tigress became addict to the company of Shahu. When a friend asked, 'how could you achieve this?' he said, "the people in the circus were trying to control her with fright; I behaved with love. I won over her cruelty with love!"[14] It has been already noted that Shahu had successfully performed a similar experiment on an African cheetahs. Not only did wild hounds accompany Shahu everywhere but also two to three cheetahs would move about as if they were tamed dogs. It was a great sight to watch. Many people who would come to meet Shahu have described such sights in their memoirs.

AN OUTSTANDING HUMAN BEING

Shahu Maharaja preferred simple living. He had no fetish for the royal attire or the bejeweled ornaments. Except a few paintings drawn at royal ceremonies all the other available paintings and photographs give a fair idea of his simple living style. Even during the get-together of the Rajas and Maharajas, his brawny physique attired in simple clothes would stand apart. In 1918, he had to face the tragedy of the accidental demise of his son—Prince Shivaji. Thenceforth he abjured the palace and royal luxuries and settled in the Sontali Camp outside Kolhapur. This camp was sort of a hermitage. There he started living like a detached ascetic. His attire would be typically rustic Maharashtrian—a reddish turban around head, a saffron shirt, a *lungi* or a *Dhotar*, and thick *Kolhapuri* footwear. The sitting arrangement comprised of three to four cots made of ropes. Over them, a seat comprising of seven to eight deer hides was arranged. Shahu sat on one of the cots and his favourite cheetahs sprawled on the rest. For the visitors a sofa and a couple of chairs were placed in front of him. Except during the rainy season, Shahu slept there under the open sky. He rose at five in the morning, had a cold bath and then got along with his daily work.[15]

Once during winter, Shahu sat wrapped in a *Ballari Ghongadi* (Blanket). The Kshatrajagadguru came to meet him. He could not help laughing to see Shahu in a coarse blanket. Shahu said, "What is so funny about it? This is the *mahavastra* -great attire - of us Marathas! At Raigad today, Panhala tomorrow and Rangana day after.....destinations of Shivaji Maharaja changed daily. Did he have luxurious sofa sets at every fort? A cot and a blanket over it would make his throne! Besides who has made the throne of the Chhatrapati a reality? Isn't it the Maratha peasants wrapped in blankets, for example the farmers of Maval who have made it possible? Then why should we feel ashamed of getting wrapped in a blanket?"[16] This memoir speaks volumes about Shahu's philosophy behind his simple living .

Shahu was not boastful of being a king. He felt that a person should be prepared to perform any task when need be. In this

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regard, the story as narrated by Gangaram Kamble is illuminating: "One of Maharaja's elephants had died. All the prisoners were summoned to carry it off. He was dragged from the Old Palace to the Raviwar bastion. Maharaj was passing by in his chariot. As soon as he saw the laborious exercise, he got out of his carriage, clasped the rope and helped drag the elephant!"[17] This king proved by his deeds that no work was lowly; that we think it to be so is the result of our low thinking.....That was Shahu, the King; undoubtedly a different king, an outstanding human being..

SHAHU THE LOKRAJA

And when this outstanding King in the conventions of the peasants, workers and the downtrodden says that "I am part of you. You can consider me as a worker or a peasant,"[18] it was not just to win over the assemblage. Those were the sincere words of a great man coming from his heart; the man who believed in the concept of equality of human beings. In a convention of workers in Mumbai, Shahu said, "Even though I am the King of Kolhapur I am proud to call myself a soldier, a peasant, or a labourer. My biological mother belongs to the Mudholkar Ghorpade family, my adoptive mother belongs to the Shirke family, the adoptive father belongs to the Bhosle lineage; and all these families in the first place belong to the agriculturists' tradition. Many people believe that it is not prudent to keep the company of the lowly and illiterate people. Even I was sermoned to that effect. However, it would not have any effect on me as I have a born affinity and affection towards the peasants and workers among whom my family prospered. The blood of the soldier and the peasant flows in my veins. So I feel happy intermingling with you. A great saintly British man has said that 'more virtues are found in the hut of poor people than in a palace'. My experience is similar. I find many virtues such as loyalty, fraternity, patriotism, devotion to the king, lack of jealousy etc. in you. Therefore, I have great respect for you. It is my request that you must consider me as one among you."[19] That the Chhatrapati should call himself a worker or a peasant was not an ordinary thing. No other king had said so earlier nor had anyone behaved in that manner. Shahu once said with pride, 'no other king intermingled with the poor as I did'. These words were not meant to praise oneself, but were a blunt statement of the fact.[20]

It is this historical fact that has created his image as *Lokraja*— People's King. Sometimes this image is of a king who eats *Ambilkanya* (coarse staple food of peasants) in the hut of a shepherd in a jungle; the king sharing *Chatni-bhakar* (jowar bread with chutney) with a farmer in his shanty or with *Berads* (so-called criminal tribe) on their settlements; the king wandering all over in his horse cart in the company of 'untouchable' *Mahars* and *Maangs*; and the king feasting with the *Phaansepardhis* (another tribe labelled 'criminal'. Many such images emerge from Shahu's biography. He was the King happier among his people rather than in the palace.

A Lokraja considers all his subjects as his children. He strives day and night for their betterment; especially he supports the weaker and the downtrodden and infuses in them the vigour for life. Shahu possessed all these distinguishing characteristics of a Lokraja. Madkholkar, while comparing him with the great Shivaji, has said, "A contemporary *Shahir* in his *Powada* has said about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja thus : everyone drinks from the lake of Shivaji;

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there is no discrimination!! If at all any other able royal person in his dynasty deserves such accolades, it is Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja!"[21]

A Bengali poet Devendranath Sen in his poem expresses similar sentiments :

"O King! Rich Mighty Heart, that feels alike
for rich and poor, for high-caste lords of men,
And for the low-caste Shudras, born in fen
Of social segregation.....
The Hindus and non-Hindus, Jains and all,
Do find a place in Halls of thy big soul!"...[22]

SHAHU THE RAJARSHI

Many scholars of Shahu's times and the subsequent period have compared Shahu with Shivaji the Great. Some have admired that many a qualities of Shivaji were reflected in the works of Shahu.[23] Some regret that even Shivaji had not thought of striking at the foundations of brutal social system.[24] A scholar like K. S. Thackeray says "....Though Shivaji is like a God as the founder of *Swarajya*, he could not get over the charms of the religious and social machinations of the *Bhats (Brahmin priests)* who had been spreading the plague of inequality in the Hindu society over centuries."[25] Actually, the socio-political contexts of the Shivaji era and Shahu's times were different. The struggle of Shivaji was mainly for political freedom while that of Shahu was for social liberation. Shivaji did not have the benefit of Western education and background of social awakening; Shahu's ideas and actions had a solid backdrop of social awakening and a comprehensive Indian renaissance right from the times of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. These and many other factors should be kept in mind while analysing the differences in the deeds and means of these two great men. They belonged to different eras. It would not be in keeping with history to search for movements of social reform of the 19th and 20th centuries back in the times of Shivaji.

Shahu was a direct descendent of Shivaji the Great. It was quite natural that at his very sight, the common people were reminded of Shivaji and their hearts filled with respect. All the classes, from a Maratha Prince like Holkar to the peasant—worker in the fields and factory were respectful towards Shahu. As such, Shahu was looked upon as the natural leader of Maharashtra. That he did not use his natural leadership to further his parochial interests, but rather strived for the betterment of the backward classes must be regarded as an outstanding dimension of his work. Many of his contemporaries have evaluated Shahu's contribution. However, no scholarly evaluation could be as cogent and succinct as made by the Kurmi community of Uttar Pradesh—a region hundreds of miles away from Kolhapur. It rightly appreciated the epoch making nature of Shahu's work and in its convention honoured him by bestowing upon this Maratha king the epithet of "Rajarshi" – a king who is a *rishi*, a wise sage. Many *Rajarshis* such as Janak, Shri Krishna, Bhishma had blessed this land in the times of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. But only one king, the Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur, attained that epithet after several millennia. A *Rajarshi* is one who is a *Gyani* and a scholar, in spite of being a Kshatriya; who sets an ideal before the society by his deeds and thoughts and changes its course. In a way, he is a

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harbinger of a new era. That the Kurmis of U.P. should confer on Shahu this epithet not only shows their maturity and profound social understanding, it also indicates how the backward communities of India of those times looked up to Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur.

"I SHALL BREAK BUT NOT BEND"

In the later half of his life, Shahu worked for betterment of backward communities and the downtrodden as a mission of his life. Towards the fulfillment of this cause, he had to fight the Brahmin and the British bureaucracies. The Government of Bombay had sent him a brief that bullied him into not maintaining any contacts with the non-Brahmin movement outside his State. Shahu's reply gives a fair idea of his unswerving devotion to his life's mission. He writes in reply, "..... Deliverance of all backward communities including the untouchables in Maharashtra is a pious mission of my life. Why should the (British) Government speak of political rights unless millions of peasants, workers, and labourers are socially, religiously, and economically reformed? On whom would the rights be conferred? Who would benefit from the rights? And what would the ignorant non-Brahmins understand about it and what would they benefit from it. I know very well who is the mastermind behind the veiled threats of deposition the Government is threatening me with. Before you depose me, I would happily resign from the throne. But this Shahu until death would not give up the movement of the non-Brahmins he has undertaken."[26]

As the non-Brahmin movement spread all over Maharashtra with active support of Shahu, the attacks on him and his family increased. Shahu had to suffer a lot. Some of his close associates thought that Shahu himself had invited this calamity. His well-wishers always wondered if Shahu were to adopt a policy focused just on himself and his state administration there was no reason for the enemy's hornet's nest to explode and pounce on him in revenge. Because that was a convenient policy most of Indian Princes followed happily. Shahu was the target of vengeful assaults from a section of his own people and at the same time he had entered the bad books of the British Government. And all this because of the mission he had undertaken. Rao Bahadur Balasaheb Gaikwad was among Shahu's well wishers. He wrote a letter to Shahu expressing these sentiments. Shahu's reply, full of self-respect exhibiting his firm resolve, intense devotion to his cause and supreme self-confidence, illuminates his character. He says, "....Your preaching is venerable. I will hold it by my forehead, but I would not do anything that does not behove a Kshatriya. Even if I am sent behind the bars, from there I will pray for the betterment of my country. I think that being bullied by the Government's order and beating a retreat from the field would be a blemish on my character. I am not prepared to blemish my character or my parents until I am alive. I have accepted your preaching. I will happily hold it by my head. But it is impossible to follow it. For that would besmirch my character. If I capitulate by threats of even the *Brahmadev* or death, let alone Lord Reading, my ancestors and gods would laugh and cry. I think of this and I feel that death and failure are measly. How can one change one's disposition?.....I won't let off my task like a + + +. I won't prostrate on the feet of the enemy just to save my life. I shall break but not bend. Government would disapprove of my act. Let it happily do so. I would suffer. I would

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get justice in the court of the Almighty for having helped the wretched, befriending the untouchables, and slogging for the improvement of the Marathas. But I vow by my ancestors that I would not do anything that does not behove of the Kshatriya and Shivaji's lineage. Nothing would happen that would tarnish my mother. I do not approve of your policy."[27]

The letter alludes to a rumour that the British Government was frenziedly trying to put him behind the bars for one reason or the other. Shahu reacts stoically without yielding an inch of self-respect. Maharashtra knew of the rulers such as Peshwa Raghunathrao who would launch hectic tantric rituals and *'yagnas'* from their prisons to propitiate the Sun God in order to get released and continue to satiate their greed for regal power and the luxuries that accompanied it. A ruler ready to go to the prison for fulfillment of his mission and prepared to propitiate gods from there for betterment of his country was new to Maharashtra. It is difficult to find a Prince in British India who had this kind of mental bend, will power and moral strength.

A PROPHET AHEAD OF HIS TIMES

Shahu must be included among those few Indian leaders of the first two decades of the twentieth century who cherished the nationalist feelings and cared for the concepts of nation, nationality, duty towards the nation, character of the nation, secularism etc. All the credit of shaping our nation must go to these architects. It was because of these people that the feeling that we all are the inseparable components of one great Indian nation took roots and blossomed. This sentiment is clearly and frequently expressed in the speeches and acts of Shahu. In the Nagpur convention of the ostracized communities, he had publicly expressed his hearty feelings saying that the people supposed to be untouchables are the components of the Indian nation and brothers having equal rights.

In the same convention, Shahu had said, ".....We all are Indians. We all are brothers. The subjects of the Indian nation are all Indians irrespective of their *Varna* or religion. Religion might be important at a personal level, but it must never jeopardize the national interests." Shahu continues, "The true religion is the service of the nation; in essence the service of the brethren; the search for finding the god among the people."[28]

He made a point that just the making of a nation was not enough in itself; the people of that nation must give shape to national character. Clarifying this view he said, "..The increase in the morality of the society is essential for the social reformation. Harmful rituals and religious superstitions have imposed on us harmful practices such as drinking of alcohol, child marriage, forced widowhood, offering girls to gods. They have led to physical, emotional, and intellectual downfall. You must take measures to ameliorate the circumstances. The primary duty in this regard is the making of the character. It is impossible to make a nation prosperous without the people of character. We must also concentrate on physical fitness. However, we must not forget that with the degeneration of morality even the mighty Roman Empire was ruined despite physical valour and virility."[29]

This has been Shahu's concept of nation, nationhood and national character. Shahu had seen a nationalist dream much before independence. According to it, the

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principalities of the Indian Princes would be destroyed once and for all over a period of time, and the only sovereign power to govern this country would be democracy. Such an eventuality was the need of the times and in it lay the well being of the Indian fraternity.—It was a good fortune of this country that people who dreamt such magnificent dreams were born in those times. It has been said time and again that the prophets are ahead of their times. There is no reason why this maxim should not apply to Shahu.

THE PILLAR OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The dream of the democratic constitution of India that Shahu saw was not by any means parochial. In the *Swarajya* of his dreams, the participation of all the backward masses including peasants and workers, and the fulfillment of their aspirations was expected. However he could clearly see the danger of the emergence of a native bureaucracy as a result of the political rights that were being bestowed in installments. These rights were sure to fall in the hands of the higher classes thereby keeping the backward masses as neglected as ever. And therefore, he was opposed to the *Swarajya* movement of the Tilak party. The opponents raised a hue and cry twisting his ideas to their convenience and alleging that his opposition was to the very idea of *Swarajya*. They declared him as the traitor to *Swarajya*. The Shahu Party in turn held that the betrayal of *Swarajya* in essence meant the betrayal of one's own people, and accused the Tilak party of betraying the *Swarajya* by refusing to recognize the equal rights of their compatriots and trampling their demand for social freedoms. The ones who demanded political freedom from the British masters were not ready to confer social freedom to their fellow citizens; if Shahu looked upon these people as his enemy, it was in keeping with the logic of history.

Therefore, Shahu's priority was to social democracy rather than political democracy. Unless such social democracy was created, the political democracy would be insignificant as far as the backward classes were concerned. And hence the upcoming leader of the backward classes, especially the depressed classes, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, while honouring Shahu had used the epithet, 'The Pillar of Social Democracy'. Sir Tyagraj Chettiar, leader of the non-Brahmin movement of Madras, has said that Shahu Maharaja who championed the cause of social democracy based on the foundations of social equality and justice, was a true proponent of democracy. After the demise of Shahu while eulogizing his work Sir Tyagraj appropriately described him as a 'democrat of democrats.'[30]

FRASER'S PROPHECY

The magnanimity of a grand banyan tree can be sensed to some extent by the one standing in its shelter. But its true grandeur and extent could be experienced only when looked at from a distance. The same could be said about the works of the great people. It is not always that the enormity of their accomplishments is judged rightly in their own times. With just two years after the demise of Shahu Maharaja, Fraser, his Guru, cogently expresses similar thoughts. He says, " We live too close to his times to view his work as yet in its true perspective, and can but speculate whether disunion among the ranks may not – for a time at any rate – check the Reformation

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movements, social, religious and political, which the last Maharaja championed. The record of his life, however, it is safe to assert, constains materials which no historian of the New India, growing up under our eyes, can afford to neglect; and when the bitterness of controversies in which he played so strenuous a part dies down, who can doubt that Indians of every class will treasure with pride, like a national possession, the memory of Sir Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja as a truly great man."[31] The enviable position that Shahu has been accorded in today's independent India proves that the prophecy of Mr. Fraser has come true.

Not that Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and Pandit Nehru's doctrine of peace, the *Panchsheel*, were not attacked vehemently by their opponents in their times. Their philosophy was derided as the doctrine of the weaklings. But now after nearly a century and after having gone through so much turmoil, violence and suffering, people have finally realized that violence or war is not the right path for the happiness of humanity. Today the world at large is left with no alternative but adopt the path of Gandhi to ensure the happy existence of humanity on earth. The same is true of Nehru's doctrine of *Panchsheel*. The foreign policy of independent India that is based on this doctrine has remained intact even under the regimes of different parties. Whether Gandhi or Nehru; their philosophies have stood the test of time because they are concerned with well-being of the whole humanity.

Shahu's ideas of social revolution too have come true on the yardstick of time. During his period, the higher classes ridiculed his thoughts whereas the so-called intellectuals neglected them. Moreover, these intellectuals did not hesitate to accuse this great man—who propounded the principle of social freedom—of treason; of betrayal of *Swarajya* and of betrayal of his own people. In those times, even the great men who led the movement of political freedom did not think that the movement of social freedom was in essence one of national independence. Because of this mentality, a simple resolution deploring the practice of untouchability could not be passed on the platform of the Congress for many long years. It was unfortunate that the people who desired political freedom of their country were ready to wait until the auspicious occasion of independence before they could free their fellow citizens of the shackles of social slavery. No wonder then that on this background, the thoughts of Shahu were neglected. However, the real tragedy is that today even after sixty years of independence these thoughts are not being implemented the way they should have been ideally. It means that Shahu's ideas and thoughts are equally true and essential even today as they were sixty years ago. And if one sees at the condition of the women, landless, peasants, labourers and Dalit communities living in the rural areas, it becomes clear that these thoughts will have to sustain many battles for a long time to come. Until this war is won; the musings of Shahu are going to prove inspiring and helpful like a beacon.

A MIRACLE IN SOCIAL HISTORY

Though the views of Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja and Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar were expressed in different words depending upon their times and circumstances, they were however the same in essence. The thought profile of all these great social revolutionaries was one and the

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same and the 'agenda' in this thought profile were also the same. Though the programs on this agenda appeared to be different, it was only because of the difference in place, time, and circumstances, the bottom-line being the same namely the building of a society sans exploitation based on the foundations of social justice and equality, the freedom of the backward classes from the mental and emotional slavery of the upper and powerful classes and to incite the insurrection of the backward classes to achieve their objective.

It was no wonder that Phule, V. R. Shinde,. Ambedkar, and Bhaurao Patil all had a common agenda. They all were the representatives of the backward classes. However that a prince born and brought up in a royal family should have the same agenda, must be regarded as a miracle in the social history of modern Maharashtra. Gail Omvedt has cited the words of an American historian at the beginning of her article. She writes, "One American historian of India, familiar with the Zamindars and Princes of northern India, expressed his amzement about Shahu : I can understand it in a man like Phule, of peasant background, but to see such social radicalism in a ruling Prince - this is utterly astounding."32

Why was it necessary for a king who was brought up among the royal luxuries from his very childhood, and who later on ascended the throne of the Chhatrapati to carry on his shoulders the flag of social revolution? True, after the *Vedokta* episode in his life, his dormant proclivities to rise in rebellion against injustice came to the fore. However, his agenda should have come to an end with his victory and the surrender of the assembly of Brahmins instrumental in the *Vedokta* episode. But it did not happen that way. Rather in the list of his revolutionary schemes, many other subjects from reservations for the backward classes to the eradication of untouchability, and from compulsory primary education to the establishment of the *Kshatrajagadguru* could be seen to have entered. He did not put down the flag of social revolution once he held it aloft during the *Vedokta* episode until his death.

HIS LIMITATIONS & MISSION

Great men in all times are bound by the limitations of their times, place and circumstances. A great man tries to carry forward the society even in despondent circumstances. However, it is not that the limitations of everyone are the same. They are different with Phule and they are different with Shahu. Mahatma Phule was born in a backward *Shudra Varna* whereas Shahu Maharaja in a higher *Kshatriya Varna* and a regal family. Phule had at times remained without food but persisted with the reform movement whereas Shahu utilized the power of the state treasury to further the movement. On the face of it, the limitations of circumstances and means of Phule appear stark. However, the throne by the virtue of which Shahu was well equipped with means of all sorts was also his greatest limitation. It was in a way a painful bindings.

Fraser has aptly pointed to this shackle. He says, "....It is true that as a ruling Prince, he had great resources at his command to give effect to his policy, but the more prominent his position, the stronger were the trammels of environment he had to burst and it must not be forgotten – the more he suffered in the battle of his cause."33

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Even though Phule lacked wealth and power, he was a free citizen of the British India. If need be, he could attack the British Government with his pen and criticize its policies, its blunders and misdoings. Shahu's status as an Indian Prince under the British Paramountcy did not allow him anything of that sort. He had to use his temporal power skillfully for the betterment of the backward classes within the limits as ordained by the British in such a way that it would not cause slightest of harm to his relations as a vassal chief of the British Government. This was a walk on the razor's edge. At a time when hundreds of other Indian Princes were busy wallowing in luxuries bestowed upon them by their princely status, this Maratha king with a necklace of cowries around his neck kept walking this tight rope all his life just for the well being of the downtrodden. The most important thing about the whole exercise was that no one had forced him to follow this path; he himself had undertaken the *Vrat*, the mission.

Many contemporary and later scholars, intellectuals, and academicians have remembered Mahatma Gautam Buddha while studying the life of Shahu.[34] Dhananjay Keer says, " After Buddha, Rajarshi Shahu has been the only king who affectionately, fearlessly, and openly ate in the company of the *Harijans* and the *Girijans*."[35] That Buddha's comprehensive compassion for humanity and his feeling of universal brotherhood were expressed in the thoughts and actions of Rajarshi Shahu - rather more in his deeds than thoughts - must be considered as a peculiarity of his mission.

THE PASAYADAN

The address that Shahu delivered at the convention of the Kurmi Kshatriyas brings out clearly his study of sociology. More important is the prayer that he recited at the end of the speech. It is symbolic of the feeling of universal brotherhood and comprehensive compassion he had in his heart. He asks of God: "Oh God! Bestow on our people wisdom and illuminate their hearts with knowledge so that we all people live in fraternity as your good children. Let us all feel other's joys and sorrows to be our own. Let us all strive together for physical, spiritual and social improvement and make this world into a heaven"[36] This prayer of Maharaja reminds one of the *Pasayadan* of the great saint Dynaneshwar. The yearning expressed in the prayer narrated above relates to message of universal brotherhood as espoused in a stanza in *Pasaydan* which says, "May the wicked shun the crooked ways/ May they get on with pious deed/ Let all the beings/ Unite in brotherhood". This is not an ordinary ideal. It is the ideal of all the Mahatmas of the world. In it is hidden the secret of the happiness and well-being of the entire human race.

The society must always be aware that even a Mahatma is after all a human being and not God. Normally, however, it does not happen. We forget that if we make Shivaji Maharaja an incarnation of Shiva, we erase the human element in him. The consecration of a great man into divinity makes our task easy. What remains then is only the celebration of his birth and death centenaries and erection of statues, and that is accomplished with élan irrespective of whether the person is Chhatrapati Shivaji, Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu or Dr. Ambedkar. We, however, do not accept the scientific attitude that even these great men were human beings as much of flesh and blood as we are, and in spite of being so,

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they accomplished such tasks of the well being of the human race that even the otherworldly god was unable to accomplish. For, if we accept this attitude it becomes our moral responsibility to follow and implement the ideals as espoused by these great men. It is true that not every one can be a great man; not everyone can be a Mahatma Phule or a Rajarshi Shahu. True, their ideals cannot be implemented fully. It is the pursuit of those ideals according to one's abilities that is expected of true followers. Dnyaneshwar in his thousands of *Ovis* or cantos in Dnyaneshwari explained the greatest of philosophies in the world; he explained lucidly the meaning of human existence; he showed many a pious path of accomplishing pious deeds and preached his brethren to behave accordingly. However, the knowledgeable saints such as Namdev were well aware that it was not possible to follow that path to the letter and hence to the later generations he has preached thus: "Dnyaneshwari is a great book says Nama! Oh, but to experience one canto" (is enough). It would not be out of place if, keeping in line with this preaching of Namdev, it is expected that you and me, we all those who adore Phule and Shahu follow at least one of their preachings. If this expectation were fulfilled even to a slightest degree, it would satisfy us that our exploration of the life of Shahu to the best of our abilities have borne some fruit. **Mahatmas live selflessly for the betterment of the world. We, the ordinary human beings, do have attachment to the worldly life. Let us hope that the life and mission of the great souls like Shahu would inspire us to actively pursue in our own way at least one of his ideals. With this prayer and with a humble salute to the sacred memory of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati, the present writer concludes this endeavour, with a semi colon though, and not a full stop.**

◆

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VOLUME - II

Section - I

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES ON RAJARSHI SHAHU CHHATRAPATI

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Introduction

This is a collection of 25 select articles on life and work of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapti Maharaja. Nine of these articles are written by the contemporary men who were either Shahu's close associates or noted non-Brahmin journalists and social activists of his times. The rert of the articles are written by the authors belonging mostly the past-independence era. The contemporary authors had witnessed the regime of Shahu. Consequently their writings bear more historical value as a primary source of Shahu's regin.

Amongst contemporary authors Sir Fraser, Tophkhane, Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Dr. Ambedkar and Prof. Latthe are the most prominent. Sir Fraser, a British Civil Servant had been Shahu's 'Friend, Philosopher and Guide' throughout his life. It was he who shaped the personality of Shahu as the most liberal humanitarian Prince of his times. His article on Shahu speaks volume on latter's work and his place in Indian history.

Commenting on Shahu's contribution in the making of Modern India Sir Fraser has to say - "We live too close to his times to view his work, as yet, in its true perspective... The record of his life, however, it is safe to assert, contains materials which no historian of the New India, growing up under our eyes, can afford to neglect; and when the bitterness of controversies in which he played so strenuous a part, dies down, who can doubt that Indians of every class will treasure with pride, like national possession, the memory of Sir Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja as a truly great man!"

Sir Fraser had written this just one year after the death of Shahu. History reveals that his words have come true. What a splendid judgment of history!

Another contemporary Wasudeo Tophkhane was Shahu's close associate and the Theosophy activist. His article throws light on the *Vedokta* Controversy and Shahu-Tilak relations with their undercurrents. Tophkhane gives many a reminisce of Shahu's reign. One of those speaks of Prof. Athavale from Mahatma Gandhi's ashram who met Shahu and had a long philosophical discussion. He was so much impressed by wisdom and high contemplation of Shahu that when he returned, he

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wrote a letter to Tophkhane, in which he exclaimed, "Through you I came in contact with a Maharaja, who, in very sense of that great title, is a genuine Maharaja, one can stand the test of Philosopher Prince of Plato's imagination!"

The third of the contemporaries is Shahu's first biographer Prof. A. B. Latthe who was a Satyashodhak activist and a leader of the non-Brahmin Party in Maharashtra. He had been a witness to many political and social upheavals of Shahu's reign. He later on became Diwan of Kolhapur State. He wrote biography of Shahu in both English and Marathi, based on the source material provided by the Kolhapur Darbar. Hence his work has been regarded as an authentic one.

While evaluating Shahu's greatness, he has described him as "the greatest Maharaja that ever sat on the throne of Kolhapur and one of the most powerful men that his nation ever produced in its long and brilliant history."

Prof. Latthe's senior colleague Bhaskarrao Jadhav was highly educated Maratha youth who was oppointed an Asst. Sarsubhe in Kolhapur State by Shahu in 1895. It was a first ever appointment of any Maratha to such a high post. It was Bhaskarro Jadhav who first acquainted Shahu with the Satyashodhak Samaj and its philosophy Later on he became education minister of Bombay Province and a member of Central Legislative Council. He was one of the senior leaders of the Satyashodhak Samaj and non-Brahmin Party.

In his article, while hailing Shahu Chhatrapati as a noble man of high principles, Bhaskarrao says, "His aim was to achieve progress of the whole nation. But he was convinced that a nation cannot progress whithout development of the vast majority of the backward classes. His firm conviction was that the human race was one and all were the children of God. He, therefore, encouraged education and propagated the Satyashodhak philosophy in order to promote his ideal."

The greatest of the contemporaries was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who had orgainized the first conference of the untouchables at Mangaon in 1920. Shahu Chhatrapati was invited as a chief guest of the function where he had congratulated the untouchables for selecting Dr. Ambedkar as their supreme leader. Shahu had also foretold the audiance that Dr. Ambedkar would one day become a national leader of all the backward classes in India.

Soon after the Mangaon Conference Dr. Ambedkar, in his journal 'Mooknayak' had penned an article on Shahu and his opponents, criticising their unjust and mischievous policies and had urged the Chhatrapati to uphold the casue of the downtrodden community, without paying any heed to the crowing of the Brahmin class. Unfortunately, this is the only article of Dr. Ambedkar on Shahu available till date. While describing Shahu as a true Kshatriya, he says- "A true heir of the Kshatriya clan Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja, by the shinning light of his great soul, has lit the flame of self-respect among the people who were kept untouchable and therefore lifeless for centuries by the so-called high castes."

The remaining four contemporary are Shamrao Desai, Ganesh Akaji Gavai, Bhagwantrao Palekar and Shripatrao Shinde. All of them were non-Brahmin journalists and social activists; and had

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written these articles just after the sad demise of Shahu in 1922. They had not only experienced the regime of Shahu, but at times also got helping hand from him in times of their difficulty. Desai and Shinde were the followers of Shahu and had taken inspiration for starting their journals on their own. All of these contemporaries have hailed Shahu as a leader of the backward classes and saviour of the downtrodden communities. Gavai goes a step further and calls him as 'God of the untouchables' and their 'Abrahm Lincoln.'

A host of other writers belongs to the post-independence era. They are from different fields of society, e.g. social work, education, judiciary, literature, history etc. Some of them have studied the life and work of Shahu and have great admiration for him. Shahu's biographer Dhananjay Keer is one of them and has aptly painted him as a Social Revolutionany King. He concludes his writting in these words - "With his indomitable, unselfish and ascetic soul, Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati proved to be the greatest ruler in Maharashtra since Shivaji the Great, He was indeed a great social man, a royal revolutionary, a supporter of democratic journalism, a promoter of Indian music, a builder of the Marathi stage, a patron of wrestling, a maker of modern Maharashtra, the father of Green Revolution and one of the founders of social and economic democracy in India."

Dr. A. H. Salunkhe, a great scholar of Ancient Indian literature and philosphy calls Shahu Chhatrapati as "A people's God." He writes, "We have not seen the divine God. But without doubt Shahu Raja was our God, consecrated by the people, who regarded people's hardship and woes as his own, who gave helping hand to those mired in the social muck and who accomplished things we expect from the so-called God."

Another scholar of English literature and well-known educationalist Dr. Janardhan Waghmare reminds us of Shelley's poem 'Ode to the west wind' and fervently urges us to draw inspiration from Shahu's life and fulfil his unfinished task of building a new society. His appeal runs-

"Rajarshi's dream is unfulfilled today trapped as it is in history's pages. Destiny beckons us to carry it forward.

The westward wind had strengthened Poet Shelley's optimism. He says, 'O wind if winter comes can spring be far behind!'

Shahu's revolutionary character had similarly strenghtened common people's optimism. But alas, "the spring is far behind, far behind."

If we can draw inspiration from this beacon of a man, I believe we can overcome the unholy atmosphere of discrimination and fractionation to build a new society fit for our progeny. It is our duty to carry forward his work."

The space here does not permit to review each and every article presented in the volume. However it is suffice to note that these articles have their own importance and place in the collection. They unfold and analyse the epoch-making policies and work of Shahu Chhatrapati in uplifting the masses, especially the rayats, backward classes and downtrodden communities. He was the only Prince in those times who had been adorned with an epithet 'Rajarshi' - a sage among the Kings. This was indeed unparallel in the known history of India.

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1.

Sir Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja -A Truly Great Man

Sir S. M. Fraser, K.C.S.I.
Friend, Philospher & Guide to Shahu

His own people will rightly honour His Highness Sir Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja as the greatest ruler of his line since the days, when the Kolhapur State attained a separate existence, and, if only from the local point of view, a record of his life would have been well worth preserving.

Averse as he was from the arts of self-advertisement, His Highness was less known either in India or in England than many other Ruling Princes,but those who know his life and work will agree that few, if any, Indians of whatever rank have made a contribution to the cause of social and religious reform, more courageous, more practical and more inspiring to his fellow countrymen, than him in British India and in the Native States.

Preachers of reform have appeared from time to time of many different types; scholars and philosophers of the literate classes, saints, poets and lovers of their fellowmen, who sprang from a variety of castes. It may be doubted, however, whether anything like a similar instance is recorded of a Ruling Prince, who worked and suffered during his whole manhood in one long struggle against the deep-rooted evils of a complex social and religious system, in order to effect the betterment of the humblest of his fellow-men.

Not a low-caste man who had himself been under the harrow or oppression, but a Kshatriya of illustrious family, and Ruler of the principal State in the Bombay Presidency-not a studious ascetic, but a

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This article is a preface to Shahu's biography by Diwan Bahadur Annasaheb Latthe published in 1924. Fraser was teacher, lifetime friend and guide to Shahu Maharaja.

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genial figure, fortunate in his one wife and his children, and very human in all his traits- not a free thinker, but scrupulous even to the verge of superstition in his personal observances- untouched by Western republican ideas and a model of personal loyalty to the Crown-an all-round sportsman who loved horse and hound—the Maharaja was a man who might have found his place among the ranks of those, who view the world as a comfortable dwelling on the whole, make the best of things as they are, and avoid stirring up hornets nest. Such a conventional attitude, however, did not accord either with the Chhatrapati Maharaja's militant conscience or with his ideal of the obligations attaching to his position. His varied characteristics add interest to the story of his lifelong fight in one of the most unselfish of causes.

From the very beginning of the twenty-six years of his rule, the Maharaja made it his mission to work for the amelioration of all classes by emancipating them from the domination of the caste system. It is a common-place that the status of a Hindu, social and religious, depends upon the caste or particular water-tight compartment of society in which he is born, and lives and ends his days. Therefore, from the nature of the case, His Highness, in combating a system based upon religion and hallowed by tradition, undertook a task of stupendous magnitude, in which the concurrent social and religious issues were later on interwoven with the question of political reform.

Reduced to their simplest terms, his manifold activities may be classified as aiming at two connected objects—the education of the masses, and the breaking down of the barriers between man and man created by caste.

Education in India, it will be remembered, ceased to be in any way a Brahmin monopoly from the date of the British Government's cardinal decision in 1833, which put in the forefront of Britain's duty to India, the task of opening up instruction in schools to all castes and creeds. Progressive efforts to extend education downwards among the masses were made from that time onwards, in spite of the handicap imposed upon a Government, which is necessarily pledged to religious neutrality, by the inveterate prejudices of Indians themselves. Millions, however, remained steeped in ignorance, and the Maharaja devoted his energies to the free and compulsory education of the backward classes as the first plank upon which to build the non-Brahmin structure for their elevation.

To the end of his life he continued founding and endowing new schools and, most important of all, hostels in order to extend the benefits of higher education to those who hitherto had possessed little desire or power to seek them. The special value of such hostels is now recognised by all educational authorities in India, but in no city throughout the continent has the system been developed to the same extend as in Kolhapur, or with the same success in supplementing the lack of religious teaching in schools. By 1920, separate hostels had been started in the Maharaja's small capital for no fewer than eleven different sections of the community, including the Indian

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Christians and the so-called Untouchables. Nor were his catholic sympathies limited to his own subjects. In all his reform work, his mission extended itself beyond Kolhapur and not merely to Marathas in the caste sense of the term, but to all the people of Maharashtra.

The religious side of his reforms gained its first impulse from what is known as the Vedokta controversy, which, it will be seen, involved a great deal more than the question, whether the Bhosale and Ghatge families were entitled to the status of Kshatriyas or should be relegated to the rank of Shudras. Professor Latthe traces historically the age-long struggle between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, which assumed an acute shape in the Deccan as far back as the days of Shivaji, when the Brahmins resisted the rising ambitions of the martial classes to assert their social rights.

As in those times, so again in this century, political jealousy of the Maratha was a class motive, colouring the religous issue in the trial of strength that took place from 1901 onwards, between the ruler of Kolhapur and the Brahmin hierarchy. To the European of today the pains and penalties of Papal ex-communication are little more than a curiosity of mediaeval history, and it is almost impossible for him to realise the odds arrayed against the Maharaja, and what it cost one who was then an orthodox Hindu, to hold out against the religious ban imposed upon him by the Brahmin, mouthpieces of the Gods, and the dispensers of divine favour as he was brought up to regard them.

His own hereditary priest, the Jagadguru Swami, or High Priest of the Shankaracharya Math, and whose close corporation of the Brahmin community in the Deccan, including thousands of his own hitherto loyal subjects, were instigated to unite against him. So far as the Maharaja personally was concerned, it seems clear that he might have compromised matters and obtained recognition of his own Kshatriyaship as a Ruling Prince. A weaker man would have yielded to this temptation, but the injustice of the bigoted persecution he had to endure, merely quickened his sympathy with those who were less able to see light for themselves, and when after an interval of years he finally won the battle, his resolve had become fixed that thereafter not only Kshatriyas, but other castes as well, should stand in social and religious matters independent of the Brahmin priesthood.

The results of this determination were far reaching. No longer content to admit the predominance of the Brahmin, so long as the Kshatriyas' claim to the Vedic form of worship was conceded, the Maharaja began to contemplate the creation of a separate priesthood of his own caste, on the analogy of the Jains and Lingayats. First, however, His Highness made inquiries, in the spirit of an Akbar, into various reform movements of Hinduism, the Satyashodhak in the Deccan, Brahmoism, Theosophy and the Arya Samaj, in search of the system which would best satisfy the spiritual as well as the social needs of the non-Brahmins.

Until comparatively recent times, it is pointed out, the conscience of the layman had remained a negligible factor in the

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disputes between rival religious factions, and Hindu society was content to assume, without question, that the claim to officiate as Purohit was a monopoly vested in the Brahmin priests. A new spirit, however, was stirring, and fresh manifestations of Brahmin bigotry awakened among considerable masses the desire to purify the Hindu religion, by rooting out priestcraft as the indispensable intermediary between God and man.

The analogy of their ideas, with the spirit of the great Protestant Reformation in Europe, was not overlooked by the Satyashodhak leaders who asserted the position that, just as the Protestants rebelled under Luther against the infallibility of the Pope, so the non-Brahmins must rebel against the Brahmin priesthood and its High Priest, the Shankaracharya Swami, who professed to keep the keys of the Hindu heavens. This and other similar movements may prove, it is obvious, of great importance in the evolution of Hinduism. Time alone will show, whether their growth is continuous or whether there is a set-back before the new spirit heaves appreciably, the masses, as, I believe, it ultimately must. However this may turn out, as the Satyashodhak made way in Kolhapur and the adjoining districts. The Maharaja established a Satyashodhak School in 1913, and the revolt against the authority of the Swami spreading from the towns into the villages, hundreds of marriages and other lesser ceremonies were performed by Marathas for Marathas.

Later on his Highness came to entertain greater hopes of a religious reconstruction in the equally tolerant doctrines of the Arya Samaj, which, being based on the foundation of the Vedas, were more acceptable to Hindus as a creed, and stronger as a weapon for the breaking of Brahmin despotism. In 1920, he instituted the Shivaji Kshatriya Vedic School for Marathas "to root out the superstitions which have been mixed up with the Vedic religion, and to restore the purity of the Vedic system." A bolder innovation was made when he appointed a Maratha to be the Jagadguru of the Patgaon Math with the following instructions: " Your ideal ought to be to do away with the middleman between God and man." In his own Palace he ordered that the worship of the family Gods should be performed at the hands of Marathas instead of Brahmins.

Nor did any inconsistency occur between his precept and his practice. Sir Shahu Chhatrapali never asked any one to do what he was not prepared to do himself. Many an advanced thinker, Eastern as well as Western, has turned again to his old faith and his boyhood's rites, when he felt the sands of life running out. But it was not so with this man. His last words, we are told, were—" I am ready to go. I have no fears ", and for the first time in the history of his race, the obsequies of a Chhatrapati Maharaja were performed, as he desired, by men of his own caste and not by the Brahmin priests.

From the characters of the two men, it was inevitable that the Maharaja should come into conflict with Tilak and his Swadeshi movement, which was socially reactionary as well as politically anti-British, and the wave of sedition and anarchy which swept over India in the opening years of this century, broke over

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Kolhapur with more severity than any other Native State. An attempt was made to murder the Resident, Colonel Ferris and numerous prosecutions followed. His Highness threw himself into the anti-Sedition Campaign with all his usual zeal and thoroughness. Not content with tackling the evil in his own territory, his successful efforts in unravelling plots in the Bombay Presidency, were of the greatest value to the British Government...

The British Government's momentous announcement of August 20, 1917, of a constitutional policy in India, which promised the people of progressive realisation of responsible Government, gave a political turn to the non-Bralimin movement, and led His Highness to open a new campaign. He was quick to realise that the constitutional changes in British India must react upon the territories under the rule of every Indian Prince and create new problems for them as for the British Government. But viewing the question less from the angle of his own Order, than as a leader of the non-Brahmin classes generally, he enunciated on many a platform the view that if the Indian continent were to be made fit for Home Rule, and if that rule were to develop on true democratic lines, instead of reimposing upon the people the yoke of an oligarchy, it was now more necessary than ever to level up the backward masses in the matter of education, to teach them their civil rights and to substitute the spirit of toleration for the rigid exclusivism of caste.

These, as we have seen, were but the aims he had been steadily pursuing ever since his accession, but with the prospect of the country's policy being controlled in the future by Indians elected on a popular franchise, he now redoubled his efforts to improve the status of the " untouchable " masses in particular.

His text, " Those who take part in politics must treat men as men " reads like a platitude to all, who do not realise the inhuman degradation to which the ban of untouchability condemns millions of human beings, at the hands of the Hindu community. The work His Highness for the depressed classes has been stupendous and finds the place of honour among his many beneficent activities. Emphasizing, that the highborn classes must make a sacrifice of their hereditary privileges as the Samurai did in Japan, The Chhatrapati Maharaja, the high caste ruler of the Kolhapur State, himself set such an example as no Kshatriya Prince had ever set before and actually ate in public from the hands of outcasts. Further, to raise their status he appointed men of these classes to places on his personal establishment, and, removing by legislation all the disabilities from which they suffered, he threw open to them service in every department of the State. Nor here again did His Highness confine his efforts to his own territory. Always bearing in mind that the Native States and the British Provinces are interwoven parts of one Indian Empire, he did not allow his rank as a Ruling Prince to deter him from presiding over numerous conferences of the backward and depressed classes in and beyond the Bombay Presidency...

To my mind the outstanding feature which explains Sir Shahu Chhatrapati's life-work, is his combination of a broad

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humanity with an uncompromising courage that led him to practise what he preached, without any of the reservations prudence might have dictated, for one who was not free like a private individual, from the restrictions of a great public position. Liberal ideas had been spreading and His Highness was by no means the first Hindu, who deplored the social evils of Hinduism and advocated its reform, though few had gone so far in stressing the Western principle, not of the equality of man, but of the equal right of the poorest and feeblest to his own freedom, and to a perfect equality of treatment.

Wide, however, has been hitherto the gulf separating words and action in the sphere of social and religious reform, and it is for the self-sacrificing courage of his actions, that the Maharaja claims our special admiration. Not his nature to halt and talk upon the brink. Fearless of consequences, he plunged in the movement himself to lead the way across. It is true that, as a Ruling Prince, he had great resources at his command to give effect to his policy, but the more prominent his position, the stronger were the trammels of environment he had to burst, and-it must not be forgotten-the more he suffered in the battle for his cause. His Highness would not have denied that he was a fighting man by nature and helped by no small sense of humour, he bore his buffets in the temper of the good sportsman that he was.

It would be absurdly unjust, however, to believe that he fought the Brahmins for the pleasure of fighting or that he did not feel very acutely, indeed, the mud-throwing of which he and his family were for years the target. Never hesitating to admit what he owed to liberal-minded Brahmins, like Mr. Ranade, Mr. Agarkar and Mr. Gokhale, he retained friends among their ranks throughout. In a word, he opposed Brahmins as a system, not so much from hatred of the Brahmins as because he loved the non-Brahmin masses and because he was that type of man-uncommon in any country-whom the sight of injustice stirred, not merely to intellectual disapproval but to a heartfelt ardour to strike a blow and remedy the wrong.

We live too close to his times to view his work, as yet, in its true perspective, and can but speculate whether disunion among the ranks may not-for a time at any rate-check the Reformation movements, social, religious and political, which the last Maharaja championed. The record of his life, however, it is safe to assert, contains materials which no historian of the New India, growing up under our eyes, can afford to neglect; and, when the bitterness of controversies in which he played so strenuous a part dies down, who can doubt that Indians of every class will treasure with pride, like a national possession, the memory of Sir Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj as a truly great man!

[Christchurch, September, 1923]

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2.

Shahu Chhatrapati-A Philosopher Prince Of Plato's Imagination

Wasudev D. Tophkhane
Theosophist and close associate of Shahu

Who was Guilty of *Vedokta* ?

My father used to be in close contact with His Highness, Shri Shahu Chhatrapati. He was in-overall charge of the *Athhara* Karkhanas of Royal Household. He had to visit the Maharaja daily to report the happenings and to take the orders signed by him accordingly. Father had to be in close contact with the labourers as well, who would come to our house daily with their various complaints and problems. It was from these people that I learnt many things about the Maharaja. They would speak and discuss about his greatness and kindness to the poor and the downtrodden and how he would issue orders for their well being. My respect for Maharaja grew every day on listening to these stories.

Later when the *Vedokta* episode surfaced, the people who were involved in it and those Brahmins who had faith in my father, would come for his advice. These discussions would go on till late evenings. The Brahmins would leave only when the drums sounded for the

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Note : The article is edited from rare autobiographical book *Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati Yanche Antarang* of the author. Mr. Tophkhane's father was among the few Brahmins, who had supported the just stand taken by the Maharaja during the Vedokta episode. Later Tophkhane himself became a close and faithful associate of the Maharaja. Tophkhane along with his friends started the Bhakti Seva Vidyapeeth, an educational society, in Kolhapur with inspiration from Maharaja. Tophkhane was follower of the Theosophy movement. His association made the Maharaja interested in the work of Dr. Anie Besant and Theosophy.

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worship of goddess Jagadamba to attend day's last prayer of the deity.

Respect for Shahu grew in my mind and I was increasingly impressed by his greatness after hearing the discussions that went on for days between my father and the Vedic Brahmins. During those discussions my father would try to convince the people of Shahu's distinctive greatness and kindness, and tell them how the Maharaja practised the charitable and spiritual acts in his daily life as ordained in the book, then unheard of, *Vivekchudamani* by the Adya Shankaracharya. This effectively silenced the Brahmins. That the Maharaja never indulged in gossiping or talking on someone's back was evident from what my father told the Brahmins. Later, my personal experiences with His Highness helped in only multiplying my respect for him.

During that time a few Brahmins from Kashi were putting up at our place as guests. They left within a couple of days but only after prolonged discussions with my father on the *Vedokta* episode. The outcome of these discussions was that they were convinced and went back saying that the Vedic Brahmins from Kolhapur should not have been so obstinate on the issue. They also felt sorry for Appasaheb Rajopadhye. They could not understand as to how such a learned and intelligent man could take so unpleasant a step, resulting into devastation of his whole family. When they probed this matter deeply, my father recited a verse of Tulsidas or Kabir as an answer for their query. All this conversation would go in Hindi which, then, I could hardly understand. All that I could make out of it was that, the fault lay with the Brahmins from Kolhapur for the entire *Vedokta* episode. The consequence of these discussions was that my negative opinion about the Brahmin class and the respect for the Maharaja, both grew stronger.

Why should they neglect younger brothers?

Kolhapur is considered to be a very holy city. The importance that is given to Kashi in the north is given to Kolhapur here. The township of Karvir is considered to be the Prayag of the South. The actual Prayag in Allahabad is far from Kashi; but the southern Prayag is hardly three miles away from Kolhapur. People from all around, throng this town for the holy dip, for a period of one month. (From January 14th to the first full moon in February). Men and women are seen even before dawn going towards Karvir. Shahu Maharaja too would go for the holy dip during this month. He would start early at dawn and after a bath and other rituals would be back for his regular worship at his residence exactly by five in the morning.

One day, His Highness along with a Brahmin, who would solemnize and usher the formal enunciation of the holy dip for the Maharaja went to the *ghats* along with Rajaramshastri Bhagavat, the renowned Vedic scholar. Bhagwat found that the priest was chanting *puranic* mantras and the process of the holy dip he followed was not as ordained by the Vedas but in accordance with *puranic* rituals. 'Why not according to the Vedas?' was the question asked by

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Rajaramshastri. "It has been going on in similar fashion for years and no religious functions are performed according to the Vedas in the royal palace", replied the Brahmin priest. His Highness, of course, understood the deep humiliation hidden in that answer. He cancelled his ritual bath under the pretext of ill health and respectfully asked the Priest to leave.

Later, His Highness told me that he was burning with anger. He further said, "When the great saint, Tukaram, had to face such insults and had to tell the God modestly about his being a low caste, then who am I to complain?" He recited a verse from Tukaram's poetry, which meant, "Thank you God for giving me birth as a low caste farmer, or else I would have died of hypocrisy. My knowledge would have been futile. So, I say, that ego would have taken me to hell."

His Highness had recited the same verse to Rajaramshastri as well. He told me that, how this incident attracted him to the poetry of the great saint Tukaram and recited several stanzas to me. While narrating how he attained serenity after the verse, *"je ka ranzale ganzale.."* (The one who accepts and helps needy, is human. He is God.), His Highness became emotional and stopped suddenly. His eyes were filled with tears. He turned his face and wiped them off so that I won't see them, but a tiny drop on the eyelashes revealed it all.

That day Maharaja talked continuously for two to two-and-half hours. I could feel his sorrow which had devastated him from within. I felt may be, he was ageing; this disturbed me all the more. I did not have the strength to console him, but could not remain silent either and burst out saying, "It is silly to feel sad about why fools behave like fools?" "You are absolutely right, but these people were not foolish as you say," said His Highness. "They are known to possess the knowledge of the ten books of Vedas (Dashgranthi) and proficient in the religious laws and are known as *Brahmavrinda*. Will they be able to bear such insult? Why should they spite people like us, just like their younger brothers, who are completely dependent on them for all the religious pleasures in the world of life and death as well? These questions haunt me constantly and then I feel very sad and unenthusiastic about everything. What is the way out of this, Mr. Tophkhane?" he asked.

"There is only one apt solution for this, Your Highness", said I. "The one who is nearer to the Almighty and understands Him, the Brahma, is the Brahmin. These people are called Brahmins only because they are born in Brahmin family. I wonder if they can even understand their own siblings, leave alone Brahma. The truth is, not a single Brahmin present in Kolhapur can righteously carry the respectful titles which you bestow upon them. They are not learned and their behaviour is best not spoken about. Whole city is aware as to where the royal carriage would go to pick up the Brahmin who goes with you to Prayag for the solemnization. They are unworthy of these designations. They can do anything to earn money. One might find such highly qualified people on the banks of great pious rivers like the Ganga, Narmada etc. or in the Himalayas; but not here."...

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I am aware of Tilak's greatness

Recently (A.D.1918), when I visited Lokamanya Tilak in Pune, we had a hearty talk, which I eventually reported to His Highness at Sontali. "I am aware of Tilak's importance and know his greatness, Mr. Tophakhane," said the Maharaja, after listening to me. This one line, which came straight from his heart, cleared all my doubts that I had about Lokamanya Tilak. I was also overwhelmed with his (Tilak's) words, since the time I met him in Pune and was attracted towards the great personality. No doubt, I felt that such a great person should not be mistaken and wronged in any way. So I was happy to hear the views of His Highness about Lokamanya Tilak. His Highness, further told me about an incident, which I was unaware of. He said that the royal family of Kolhapur was indebted to Lokamanya Tilak as he was the first person to bring to light the tortures that the then Chhatrapati was sufferring at the hands of his Diwan, for which he (Tilak) had to face his first imprisonment.

This is what His Highness told me :

"I had spoken to you in this context earlier. But today I do not mind telling you that there was a time when I was sure that we both (Shahu and Tilak) could work hand in hand. Neither did Tilak nor did I, tell you who was at fault and what actually happened. Let me tell you today. I was always worried about one thing, the British might demolish our state whenever they feel like, just as small children build sand castles one day and destroy them the very next day. The death of Late Shri Rajaram Maharaja (Grand Father of Maharaja) was wrought by them (The British) on the way to Italy. Shivaji IV was a proud person who never succumbed to any pressure. He was also killed brutally and in a disgusting manner. I am no exception for them. They (the British Government) wanted to prove me guilty of poisoning. Had they been successful in it they could have imprisoned me and taken over the state. I wanted to discuss these matters with Tilak, but he was getting deeply involved in politics. It was difficult for me to meet personally. I was very cautious as not to fall into the hands of the Government or to give them any kind of opportunity to nail me. I sent a message, through the word of mouth, to Tilak, but instead got a reply that I should send these things in writing. I did not believe in this message and refrained myself from any further involvement. I believe this was a mischief played by the middlemen."

Tilak was at fault

The Maharaja continued, "Later when the *Vedokta* controversy began, gossip flew high that the royal family of Kolhapur did not belong to the Kshatriya fold but the Shudra Varna. I felt Tilak would definitely help us and find a way out. But he did not come up with any support; instead, I heard that he was supporting the Kolhapur Brahmins in this matter. I was depressed and confused. The truth is that the time was not on our side. Had your father been alive he would have told you in detail. I waited for three weeks, for the matters to take their own course. Your father tried to speak to the Kolhapur Brahmins and make them understand and he thought

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he would be successful. But when we realized that they were directed from outside, then we made a plan to counter it and started acting accordingly."

"Involvement of Mr. Tilak in this matter, as I had expected of him, would have saved us from many ugly situations and the *Vedokta* would not have taken a viscious turn. Moreover, I could have taken the advantage of Tilak being on my side, and all the matters that had become difficult would have been solved without being conspicuous to the British and I could have had an open conversation with them regarding this matter. Thus I feel Tilak was at fault, by refraining to take any step, which he should have taken. It is not that I was not at fault at all. By saying that Tilak committed this mistake, I meant, all these unpleasant things that happened during that time, would not have happened and everything could have been resolved easily. Also our dream of working together would have come true. The result was the mutual blame game, bickerings and maligning each other became a routine. That I was named as 'Traitor to the country' was a part of this malice."

Who would betray himself?

His Highness continued to narrate, "Soon after I was crowned, I gradually sent away the Europeans, who were in service here. Well, was this treachery? I shared good relations with Colonel Woodhouse and Lord Willingdon. But whenever any European came to visit our state, the cars at their service invariably would break down on the way. It was only when the chairman of the Theosophical society, Dr. Annie Besant, decided to visit us in the summer of 1915 that I personally looked into their arrangements. At the end of 1920, I had been to Madras to visit Lord Willingdon. (Friend of Maharaja and Governor of Madras) From there I went to Adyar, where I met her once again and was fascinated by her work and my respect for her only doubled."

"The schools which she had started for the children of the untouchables in Adyar were equally neat and clean like that of her other work. The *Harijans* were not at all neglected. All this made a great impact on me and I had made up my mind to invite Dr. Besant to Kolhapur once again to rearrange the educational pattern as per her advice. You wanted me to own a couple of Rolls Royce, which I was against but relented on it for Dr. Besant's welcome, when you said that you would convince her for a visit to Kolhapur. You know all this. Do you find anything treacherous in this?"

"When Babu Arvind Ghosh was declared guilty under act of sedition and tried by the British Government, I sent five thousand rupees for his help, with Capt. Madhavrao, brother of Mr. Khaserao Jadhav from Baroda. I had also said that I would help them (the freedom fighters) whenever needed. Was this treachery? This was part of the plan to malign my reputation in the eyes of people, which did not succeed. Truth is that even if you shout from rooftop no one will believe that I have betrayed my country. In fact, even with all the craftiness, if anyone tries hard to convince the people they would not believe, because, betraying your country is betraying yourself and who would do so?"

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Bring Tilak to Panhala

At that time, while I was returning from Mumbai, I got down in Pune to meet Tilak in the Gaikwad Wada, as he had directed, in our earlier meeting at Hon. Daji Abaji Khare's bungalow. In this first meeting I told him about how my relationship with His Highness grew stronger over the period of time, in detail. I told him that His Highness had once shown his unhappiness that they both (Shahu and Tilak) could not work together. I added that, neither did His Highness ever tell me, nor did I ask him, as for who was at fault. After hearing this Tilak said, "'What Maharaja told you is absolutely correct and nothing could be worked out."

May be it was this attraction between the two or His Highness's urge to help Tilak in his illness, that he asked me to bring Tilak with all his associates to Panahala from Sardargriha in Mumbai. His Highness was ready to make all required arrangements for the whole group at his Panhala residence. I decided to leave by the mail to Mumbai, that very day. But as I knew of the love - hate relationship between the two, I could not refrain myself from asking, "You both grab the first opportunity to malign each other but today you want him here in his illness; so what is the truth?"

His Highness drew my attention to an emotional incident that took place during the war between Prithviraj Chauhan and his uncle. Prithviraj Chauhan heard that his uncle was seriously injured. He went to meet his bed-ridden uncle, in the evening, wearing plain clothes. As per the dying wish of his uncle, they both had meal from the same plate. After narrating this touching incident, His Highness continued, "We are born in a country and in the great Aryan tradition, where enmity is not eternal. We know where to stop. Had I been ill instead of Tilak, do you think he would not have cared for me? If anyone had said so I would say this is not the truth. Mr. Tophakhane, I know the capability of Tilak. So please, get up immediately and rush to Mumbai by today's mail and get him here. You just send a wire to Mr. Kumbhojkar, I shall do all the arrangements regarding the special railway train and other things."

Hearing this forthright statement by the Maharaja, I left for Mumbai almost immediately. Early next morning when I reached Pune I came to know that Tilak had passed away and people had thronged the Pune station to go to Mumbai to pay him last respects. People wanted me to go to Mumbai; I refused and returned to Kolhapur that very night...

Sahahu's simple lifestyle

How could an heir to the great Chatrapati Shivaji live so austerely as the Maharaja did was unbelievable and a mystery that even I could not solve despite my spending eight to ten hours daily for nearly six years with him. It is not surprising if anyone would expect to see rich furniture and beautifully designed sofa-sets on a visit to his residence. But the kind of furniture that His Highness used which I would see daily would surely shock the newcomers. If His highness was not out after sunrise then he would sit in the veranda on the

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west of the building. The furniture around him would contain two cots woven of strings and a couch plus few chairs, for the visitors. One of the cots would be occupied by two of his pet light-eyed cheetahs and the Maharaja himself would occupy the second one. I could not curtail my curiosity once, about the mattress on his cot. Imagine my surprise when I came to know that it was made by stitching together a few skins of deer. His Highness would prefer the same kind of mattress instead of cotton one in the night as well. And except during the rainy season he would prefer to sleep in the open air, right under the sky. This was the story of his furniture.

He would only wear soft cotton clothes dyed in the colour of bark of a specific tree. His life-style was as simple as his clothes and furniture. He would wake before sunrise and start his day only after a cold-water bath and *puja* of the Almighty. He never changed his routine. An interesting incident which happened in Delhi is worth telling. Delhi has extreme weather; the temperature soars in summer and falls drastically in winter. His Highness would bathe with cold water thrice a day, once before dawn, then before his lunch and the last at around six to seven in the evening, whether it was summer or winter. The Maharaja of Bhavnagar was in Delhi once, when His Highness was on a visit. Despite the severe cold, His Highness would get up before dawn to have his ritual cold-water bath. The Maharaja of Bhavanagar would wake his children at that hour in the morning, only to show this and would say, 'Our Chhatrapati has a cold water bath so early in the morning and you need hot water even if you rise late at eight...'

Your Maharaja is a jewel

Once during the session of Chamber of Princes in Delhi, the secretary to the Viceroy addressed the Chief of Sangli as Mr. Patwardhan. His Highness objected and said, "He was the Rajasaheb of Sangli." After this the Raja of Mudhol questioned, that if he was to be addressed as Raja, then what should he be addressed? "Call yourself Maharaja," pat came the reply from His Highness. "Then what shall Your Highness be addressed?" asked the Raja of Mudhol once again. "Call me your porter," replied His Highness and went to sit with the Raja of Sangli who was sitting alone at the back.

I was very pleased after listening to this incident narrated to me by Bapusaheb, brother of the Raja of Sangli, himself. "Really Tophkhane, your Maharaja is a jewel. Many in this part misunderstand His Highness, and many others, I believe, purposely, misrepresent him. I am very sorry for all this madness and jealousies amongst us," he added further.

Philosopher Prince of Plato's imagination

Once, Professor Athavale from Gandhiji's *ashram* had come to my place as guest. He was a well read, learned, intelligent and modest man, with high proficiency in Sanskrit. I would always take such people for a visit to His Highness. I took him to Sontali to meet His Highness.

His Highness seemed to be extremely pleased after a three-hour discussion with

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the Professor. His Highness himself dropped us at our School and asked Professor Athavale specifically to revisit him next time he came to Kolhapur. Early next morning, Professor Athavale left for Kurundwad. I saw the royal vehicle waiting after seeing the Professor off at my residence. "Please send a wire to Professor Athavale and call him back, as I want to discuss more on yesterday's topic. I shall not be satisfied till I finish the discussion," said His Highness.

The Professor returned as per the telegram; but interestingly his relatives in Kurundwad advised him not to go to see His Highness as they thought that he would involve the Professor in something harmful. But Professor Athavale came back saying, "The Maharaja has called me, so I have to go." Again the two had detailed conversation and discussion over the matter from three in the afternoon to six in the evening, after which the Professor became a bit restless, as he had to catch the mail. His Highness could not fail noticing this and said, "Do not worry Professor, as per my orders, the train won't move without taking you. So let us have some snacks and then leave."

"The Professor was stunned hearing this. Later, after the royal Tiffin, His Highness himself went to see him off, and of course had also reserved a seat for him till Wardha. After all this royal hospitality we do not know what impression the Professor carried about His Highness and what did he report to his relations in Kurundwad. Later, he sent a letter to me wherein he says, "Through you I came in contact with a Maharaja, who, in very sense of that great title, is a genuine Maharaja, one who can stand the test of the Philosopher Prince of Plato's imagination!"

(From *'Rajarshi, Shahu Chatrapati Yanche Antaramg'* with acknowledgements)

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3.

Shri Shahu Chhatrapati - The Champion of Non - Brahmins

DIWANBAHADUR PROF. A. B. LATTHE
Satyashodhak thinker, leader of Non-Brahmin Party, Diwan of Kolhapur State, Finance Minister of Bombay Presidency and Biographer of Shahu

THOSE who had seen the giant figure of His Highness and known what splendid energy and vitality he possessed for many a year had never thought that he would succumb so soon as at the age of forty-eight. The confidence of his friends, and of himself too, in his health and strength was in many ways fully justified. But in this very self-confidence lay concealed the seeds of the danger which was threatening his life for some years past. The hereditary tendency to corpulence exhibited by him in early days had undermined the healthfulness of his life. His irregularities and even the defiance of nature's laws as explained to him by the Doctors to which he was often tempted introduced into his excellent physique the germs of those diseases which carried him away at so early an age.... Rest and sojourn in Europe for a course of baths and the like were prescribed. But he was so absorbed in his work at Kolhapur and he was so much given to it that nothing, not even the coming dangers, could persuade him to withdraw even temporarily from the work he had undertaken. His nature could not allow him respite from work which he had made up his mind to do.

There are some men who live for work and others—a very large majority—for whom work exists if they choose to do it. His Highness unquestionably belonged to the first category. Julius Caeser, a few moments before being stabbed, said that he preferred a death without notice. A few hours before passing away, Ranade told one of his friends that the best death is the death of a man dying in harness. His Highness'

This is an extract from Prof. Latthe's "Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur." Prof. Latthe was a close associate and first biographer of Shahu.

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love for the work on hand was so overpowering that, even if he had wished to be away from it, he could not have done so. It was in incessant and intense energising that he found his rest and peace. As in Shikaring he would wander about for hours and hours defying the elements of nature and the laws of human health, intent only on achieving his purpose, in other spheres of life as well would he throw all his energy and all his heart into the work he chose for himself and would not bend to anything, any dangers, any risks that beset his path. His greatness, and, I may add, even his weakness, lay in this trait of his character.

Genius is sometimes defined as an infinite capacity for work. Others emphasize another aspect of genius when they say that it consists in some peculiar aberration of the mind. Both definitions are essentially based on the same essential characteristics of human greatness. As the slave of nature's laws and the laws of society, man can live happily and in peace, doing little good and less injury to others, the type of the common run of amiable humanity. Genius exhibits itself always in a capacity to deviate from this beaten track of human life. The deviation may be on one side or another. It may degenerate into a pestilential attack on the established laws of morals or the not wholly balanced course of intellectual activity. It may sometimes rise to great moral and intellectual heights unscaled and unscalable by frail humanity. In any case, genius is a departure from the routine, humdrum life—the life which excites no admiration, contribute nothing extraordinary to the sum total of human happiness, but is all the same the allotted portion of a happy life. Genius is always a volcanic irruption, pulling down mountains or submerging continents as well as creating fertile islands and cutting fertilising channels for the flow of new currents of human happiness.

It is considerations like this which apply to the life of His Highness and explain its manifold, far-reaching and all penetrating activities. In this also lay the impossibility of his taking rest and treatment when both were demanded by his body but none could be taken at the cost of the all-absorbing interests of his life.....

A mind like this could not disentangle itself from its activities even for considerations which would have been decisive for most other men. This led to his neglecting the advice which all his doctors and friends were for years giving him. Since 1919 he knew that he had not a long life before him. The heart trouble which ultimately proved fatal was growing serious and his body was giving way in all directions. His spirit and his interest, however, remained unconquered and indomitable...

His Highness was fully conscious to the last moment of his life. But the shooting pain in his heart was extremely excruciating and made him restless. The whole night was spent in anxious thoughts and sufferings. A little before 6 in the morning, he sat up a moment. " I am ready to go. I have no fears. Goodbye to all," he said and as he lay down he breathed his last.

The sad news was telegraphed to Kolhapur where it reached about noon. In the darkness of the sorrow which spread about in the State, the only thought was to have a last glimpse of the great man with whom the fortunes of the State had been so long cast and to render to his remains

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the last honours which were their due. The body was carried to Kolhapur *via* Poona and Satara where thousands gathered on the roadside to show their respect to him. Kolhapur was reached at about midnight and his illustrious son and successor had to perform the painful duty of announcing his own accession to the ancient throne of the Chhatrapatis hitherto occupied by his beloved father whose body was now laid on it for the last time. Amidst heart rending scenes, the Yuvaraj was proclaimed the Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur and the huge concourse of people who welcomed their new Ruler proceeded with heavy hearts to perform the last ceremonies pertaining to the body of the late Chhatrapati. It was carried on a long and solemn procession, with all the honours due to the position of the dead, to the sanctified crematory of the Royal House of Kolhapur and the Mahratta students of the Shivaji Vedic School were called upon for the first time in the history of the Mahratta community to officiate as the priests of the Chhatrapatis in place of the Brahmins on an occasion of this nature.

Superstitions cling the hardest to sorrow-stricken minds and an innovation becomes unthinkable to them. The young Maharaja and his widowed mother were called on to decide under the crushing weight of the sorrow which had befallen them whether they were to choose to stick to traditions and call the Brahmins or prove true to the vow which the dead had himself made them take. The decision was the only decision which a worthy son and a worthy wife could take. "Come what may, " answered the Dowager Maharanee, "I shall be true to the wishes of my husband." Many educated Hindu reformers have quailed on an occasion like this. But they were not true Kshatriyas like Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and the queen mother.

Thus passed away, leaving behind him the Mahratta nation to mourn his loss, the greatest Maharaja that ever sat on the throne of Kolhapur and one of the most powerful men that his nation ever produced in its long and brilliant history. After all that can be said against him is said, the fact remains that the Mahratta nation—I include the whole people and no particular caste in it—has never produced a greater, a bolder or a more resourceful intellect. The non-Brahmin Mahrattas (including the untouchables) admired him, loved him and even revered him. The Brahmins could not but admire him even if they could not join the majority of their brethren in loving or respecting him. There is no wonder that they could not do so. He fought them ruthlessly, incessantly and unrelentingly. They even hated him to the same extent as the others loved him. It could not be otherwise.... Till history has its turn of pronouncing a verdict on these points, the Brahmins will continue to look upon his work with admiration mixed with anger. But they cannot deny to him an eminent position in the history of Maharashtra, though its exact and relative position with reference to that of the other great men of the Mahratta nation may be a matter of difference of opinion....

As an individual, the Maharaja was so extraordinary a figure as to baffle most on-lookers who tried to fathom his full depths. Usually he was the simpliest and kindliest of men. Avoiding the Palaces, living in comparatively smaller and ruder houses, lying down on a hard platform of planks, dressed in a simple Dhotar and shirt and Pheta beyond which he never required anything, interested in the smallest affairs of his meanest servant or friend, kind and forgiving to most people,

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free in the company of the low and the rustic, willing to hear all sides and even to be rudely attacked, simplicity of nature as well as habit could hardly go further. This was in fact the greatest secret of his masterful personality. He had many enemies . But he could bring many of them under the charm of his influence. The secret of this success lay in a large measure in this trait of his character. Nature had given him in abundant proportions a rare geniality of temper which until but late in his life was never disturbed or ruffled by anything.

His Highness was indeed a bad enemy, furious and remorseless in his blows. But he was also slow to make enmities and even when he made them, he was ready to shake hands with his foes. Tolerant of others, willing to excuse the weaknesses in men, always intent on the object in view, optimistic enough to forget past wrongs if future friendship was possible, he was easily loved by as he himself loved others. Mr. Candy, Mr. Rashinkar and Mr. Tilak may be quoted as instances. When he heard of Mr. Rashinkar's illness, he forgot that he was the leader of the Brahmin opposition in Kolhapur in 1906-07, saw him on his sick bed, helped him and cheered him up. When he heard of Mr. Tilak's illness, he wrote to his son :

" I am extremely sorry to hear that the Lokmanya is not doing well. Please wire to me daily how he progresses. I think he should be removed to a warm climate. I wish he comes to stay in my Bungalow at Miraj and take treatment from the skilled Doctors like Vail and Wanless and I think he will be then alright. I have sent to you Messrs...."

When a Marathi daily paper in Bombay belonging to the extremist school began to expose certain suspicious facts connected with public funds in the custody of Mr. Tilak and his friends, his clientele, consisting as it did of Brahmins who adored Mr. Tilak as a demi-god, fell rapidly and this was a serious threat to the very existence of the paper. Appreciating the honesty of purpose of the editor of this paper, His Highness gave him a loan through a common friend. A few days later His Highness came to hear that the paper was suffering in popularity owing to its partial championing of the non-Brahmin cause of His Highness. He hastened immediately to write to the editor not to write anything of the kind and incur any injury to his popularity. After some time, it was found that the same paper began to write against His Highness. With a promissory note in his hands from the editor, what did His Highness do? He wrote to the common friend in whose name the Note stood to cancel it immediately, lest "we might be tempted some day to demand the amount of the Note through a feeling of revenge. Let us leave no room for such a desire for revenge ever arising in us."....

The kindly feeling in His Highness enabled him to enjoy the endless confusion and worry caused to him by all sorts of ignorant and rude people about him. "It was his deep enjoyment and most sympathetic understanding of the human side in all those with whom he came into contact," to use the words of Sir George Lloyd, " that his character, to my mind, derived its chief strength and charm." A man would go to him with a story of his quarrel with his wife or some other woman in his house. Another dunned him with a complaint against a rival who had possibly a little while earlier told him a long tale of his counter-complaints.... And in this way scores of people surrounded him from early morning to late in the evening. He heard them quietly and attentively and did what was in his own

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view right or necessary. But not a word of annoyance escaped him and not a frown stole over his genial face. And amidst all these varied pre-occupations, he never ignored anything small or great. Though he might decide to refuse many a request, his wonderful attentiveness and retentiveness enabled him years afterwards to recall almost everything of any consequence and to contradict any one who changed his ground or made an inconsistent demand....

The rehabilitation of the Kolhapur State and through it of the glories of the Mahratta nation, though obviously in a modified form, was one great part of the work which His Highness deliberately assigned to himself at the outset of his career and standing now at a distance of nearly three decades we can easily decide for ourselves how far he has succeeded. He realised from the start that his whole ambition was bound up with the British Government to whom he was loyal in every sense of the word. As a Prince, as a sincerely loyal ruler in the British Empire, as a non-Brahmin who wished to assert himself, he was placed under numberless limitations.... But one can easily imagine them from the nature of the task and the circumstances in which the Maharaja had to find out his way to his goal.

He had in the first place to make his own position sure in a State which he rightly described as the 'mother of minorities'. He had to subdue the numerous forces which impeded the full use of his own powers. His State was at the lowest possible ebb of its prestige when he took up the reins of power. Misfortunes of all kinds has conspired to place Kolhapur — the embodiment of Mahratta greatness and glories—lower down in the rank of Indian States than many a petty Chiefship in the country. His feudatories had come to look upon the suzerain powers of the Chhatrapati as a myth. His officers looked upon the new Raja as their own creation — to be turned into a puppet in their own hands. An attempt to increase influence was likely to be misconstrued in various ways and it was so misconstrued for some time. No accusation, was too absurd to be made against him. He and his *alter ego*, Bapusaheb, were suggested to have had a hand in the seditious activities of the Shivaji Club. The history of Malharrao Gaikwad was sought to be repeated in Kolhapur and His Highness, his brother and officers stood on the brink of being hauled up on a charge of attempting to poison his Resident.

The moment he introduced a few non-Brahmins in his service, he was snubbed on all sides and the first officer in the State told him that the course he was adopting would land him in great difficulties. His best friends were told that he disliked his European Officers. The powerful Brahmin community refused to him the mere status of a Kshatriya, for, they insisted that he was socially no more than a helot. What strength, what moral support, could he then expect from quarters which despised him as a Sudra whom fortuitous circumstances had placed in power?

His people, the great Mahratta nation, was lying low in the dust. History, for which he had displayed a liking even when he was a boy, had taught him what misfortunes had been heaped upon his ancestors by the intrigues and treachery of their own creatures. He had vividly realised how the non-Brahmin warriors and statesmen of Shivaji and Rajaram had been blown away like chaff by the stormy hurricane of Brahmanical cunning. He had before him the fate of Chhatrapatis reduced to imprisonment, his own ancestors driven

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within the walls of their own city and, out of it, to the protection of a hill fortress for the very safety of their lives. The intrigues and factions of his own Court stood before him in all their naked hideousness, reducing the power and prestige of the Chhatrapatis to a shadow.

Standing at the very bottom of a steep ascent, his path bestrewn with dangers and impediments, heavy clouds threatening him with a storm from overhead almost every moment, he began to trudge on. What do we find in 1922, when Providence directed him to lay down the reins ? The State was restored to a great part of its prestige. He was his own master in the affairs of his State. The machinery he had to use was completely transformed. The clouds had largely dispersed. Loved by his suzerain, loved by his people, dreaded by his opponents, the idol of thousands of his countrymen, the saviour of the fallen and the depressed, he died a powerful man, a powerful ruler, a powerful reformer, the champion of the non-Brahmins and the man who laid the foundations of democracy in the Deccan.

I do not for a moment forget the defects in Maharaja's work. But, in a large measure they were unavoidable defects. Contending with adverse forces, no one could have done the work he did without committing many of the mistakes he committed. In his private life, he allowed many people to deceive him. He knew that the explanation given was a lie... But with all that, he accomplished for the State and for the non-Brahmins what none but a great man could have accomplished. It has been said that he was a mere flatterer of the British Officers, a hater of Swarajya, an unscrupulous man wanting in all or most of the higher impulses of greatness. Knowing fully as I do all that may be said in support of these charges and recognising as I do that His Highness had to use many instruments which many people had reason to dislike and avoid, I have no hesitation in saying that he was inspired by ambitions which the history of Kolhapur and the history of the Mahratta people will undoubtedly adjudge as great and noble.

In the annals of the world, pure saintliness has unfortunately rarely been able to conquer political opponents. Faced with the intrigues which reduced Shahu of Satara to impotence and which leagued together in an unholy alliance to depose the last of Shahu's line for no fault of his other than that of being good and self-assertive, His Highness could not but follow a policy which made him open to various criticisms. I will not try to justify everything. But I do think that he was inspired by a high purpose and brought to its accomplishment qualities which have been the privileges of only a few among mankind.

His success was also great—great in view of the difficulties he had to overcome, the dangers he had to avoid and the circumstances he had to contend with. That success, though certainly far from being complete, was so great and so fruitful to the Kolhapur State that to him the State will be bound to remain grateful during all time to come. Perfection is never reached and his successor has certainly ample work to do along-the path which his father had chosen. But there can be no doubt that His late Highness carried forward the State a very, very long way and left it greater, stronger, more prosperous and more hopeful than it was ever before.

[From 'Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur' with acknowledgements]

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4.

Shahu Maharaja - A Noble Man of High Principles

Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav
Close Associate of Shahu, Satyashodhak ideologue.
Education Minister of Bombay Province and Member of
Central Legislative Council

Shahu Maharaja ascended the throne in 1884 as an adopted legal heir of the Kolhapur State. His biological father expired in 1885. He took over the reins of administration in 1894 and left for the heavenly abode, early in the morning of, May 6th, 1922. In these 28 years of successful career, Kolhapur developed fast and in every sphere. Literacy increased, the backward classes came up, untouchability was eradicated, businesses & industries grew, and mills started working. In the span of his short career, development became visible all over the State which improved life of the common man.

The Maharaja's mother expired when he was 3 year old and his father died when he was just 11. He was orphaned at a very young age which made him into a responsible person. He learnt how to behave with others all by himself at that tender age. We cannot but appreciate smartness of this young boy from the few incidents of his childhood which he sometimes narrated.

'Vesh asava bawala, pari antari nana kala.'

(Let the appearance be simple, but within let there be many talents)

Thus says saint Ramdas, a sage contemporary to Shivaji the Great in his book *Dasbodh* .

Shahu Maharaja had imbibed this preaching even before he had read *Dasbodh*. He not only learnt it but also practised it. Many arrogant people unaware of his vast knowledge would make a laughing stock

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of themselves while talking to him. Simplicity and his apparent innocence would deceive those who wanted to impress him. They would realize their mistake but only after falling flat on their faces!

His foresight was his greatest quality. He would never take up a task until he has had given a thought to it. And once taken up he would make it a point to finish that task patiently. He would be aware of the problems to be faced and therefore try to avoid them or make arrangements before hand. The pawns would realize the check and mate situation only after the game was over. Ultimately everyone would be in awe of his expertise to handle the situation.

'Je ka ranjale ganjale, tyansi mhane jo apule,' (one who takes to bosom the oppressed and the poor, is a real *sadhu;* see God in him) saint Tukaram had said. That was Maharaja's nature. No needy person would ever leave without any help from him.

The Maharaja realized early that the Marathas and the uneducated classes, who comprised 95 per cent of his subjects, were living in miserable conditions. The non-Brahmins were unable to make the most from the high schools and college long been established in Kolhapur. There were only two matriculate Maratha youths. However, they were not given jobs according to their caliber. One was appointed in the school but was not allowed to teach but dumped in the library and the other who had a land granted to him as a valet in the palace was never allowed to do job above that level.

There were many Brahmins in higher positions who had not passed a single examination. In fact there was once a time, when only the pass outs from Rajaram College were allowed to take up state government jobs. This was almost a rule and since it was beneficial for the Brahmins, they would try hard not to break it.

The Maharaja believed that a state can be managed properly only if people from all the classes worked together. Therefore he summoned educated non-Brahmins from outside to help him. These people would lead the spread of education among the common masses. After this he opened a hostel named 'Victoria Maratha Boarding House', for the students from all castes. Thus after preparing leaders from all castes, he encouraged them to take up the matter of uplifting their own society.

He was well aware of the pathetic conditions of the untouchables and made determined efforts to improve their situation. The untouchables were backward in all aspects. They were not allowed to stay in the village or do a profiting business. As a result they always remained poor. This resulted into illiteracy and filthy lifestyle. Shahu Maharaja took up the task of improving their lot.

The Maharaja encouraged formation of committees to spread higher education among these people. There were schools run by *Mahars* and *Chambhars* for their children. But they could not pursue schooling after the vernacular IV std. As a result they were unable to grasp the English lessons in higher classes. To

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overcome this problem a special class was started. The first batch of teachers, appointed for this school, was enthusiastic and hardworking. These teachers began their social work by teaching these untouchable students. One of them was Mr. Shripatrao Shinde, who later on started a non-Brahmin paper Vijayi Maratha in Pune. Many students who were trained under him grew up very fluent in English and also would attain first rank in the school. Education without a strong base cannot build a good career.

Shahu Maharaja thoughtfully planned to give scriptural education to these so called untouchable children. He asked the *swamis* from the Arya Samaj to help him in this matter. The *swamis*, as per their system, converted these children to *Arya dharma* and taught them the *Vedas* after performing the sacred thread ceremony for them. As a result, these children became confident and forgot the belief that they were from the lower castes and steadily started progressing. They behaved and also were treated with equality in the schools. Thus gradually untouchability in the schools completely vanished.

The Maharaja believed that education alone would not improve the financial status of these downtrodden. They needed jobs to put their education to use. Therefore he made their appointments in various departments. Some were given jobs in horse stable and later they were promoted to coach-men. Some could look after the wild animals like the Cheetahs, dogs and falcons and were given those jobs. Others were accommodated in the cavalry section and later were made couriers.

Thus untouchablity was gradually eradicated among the state employees. Some intelligent students were trained as lawyers and granted *sanad* to practise law. With their entry in the judiciary, the courts too began shedding off untouchability. Some youths were encouraged to open tailor's shops in various villages. Thus the orthodox and traditional high caste people started having problems keeping their purity intact. But this way the Maharaja discovered their hidden talents and made them self confident and powered with self esteem.

The Maharaja once organized a grand function at the Miss Clark Hostel established for the so called untouchables. Political Agent of the State was invited to chair the function. The function went on to become a remarkable event. The chairman was brought by the Maharaja in a postilian carriage driven by four horses. Students stood at the gates to welcome him with various animals. All the students were from the untouchable castes such as *Mahars, Mangs* and others; and all of them had the feeling that it was their own function. The students and others realized that with proper education, encouragement and equal opportunities this downtrodden community can do wonders. This thought boosted their self-confidence. Instead of regular custom of singing welcome songs for the guest, the students seriously recited the *Vedas*, making a distinctive impact.

Shahu Chhatrapati's working style was commendable. The substantial funds,

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he granted for welfare of the untouchables, were not handed over to the usual state officials. Instead, he meticulously searched and selected people committed to the task and got the welfare projects executed through them so that the funds would be properly utilised. He would support them financially or donate a building occassionally according to the need. At the same time he encouraged them to create awareness in the villages and collect monetary help from those who could identify with the cause. This infused liveliness in any movement as more and more selfless workers came forward to serve.

Maharaja had good understanding of people's nature. So he decided to employ on such schemes only those who actually wanted to do something for the untouchables. Employing officers would not have fulfilled his vision.

In fact every man is capable of doing something or other. To understand his ability and give him a job accordingly is the most important task. Shahu Maharaja had perfect strategies which resulted in success of all his tasks undertaken. He would rope in all passionate volunteers for his movements ensuing development without wastage of money. He raised the capabilities of the untouchables, gave them entry everywhere and created self-confidence among them; that was how he methodically and with perseverence worked for amelioration of the untouchables. Nowhere this level of success could be achieved in this field despite spending enormous funds.

The Maharaja believed that a fight for a good cause should begin at home. His method was to arouse the conscience of the people so that they would voluntarily work for the cause. His queen Laxmibaisaheb, his daughter Akkasaheb and his son Rajaram Chhatrapti all passionately believe in the cause of uplifting the untouchables. This passion was created by the example of the behaviour of Shahu Maharaja himself. He rarely preached or argued for eradication of untouchability. But his behaviour would set such an example that even an orthodox man would realize his mistake. He steadily and with meticulous planning eradicated untouchability. He passed a law against it when it was almost eradicated. Thus there were no protests against it as the people had got used to it.

Eradication of untouchability was among the many missions that Shahu Maharaja had undertaken, and we have discussed how he embarked upon it and fulfilled it by employing people passionately dedicated to this objective. He used similar tactics in the other fields as well.

No one was barred from the Maharaja's audience; especially the important personalities coming from outside the state could easily meet him. The Maharaja would love to meet such people and have a long chat with them. Within no time he would judge the person, understand his likes and dislikes and would easily start channelising his intellect and energies towards some constructive work. The hostel built for the Jain students by Mr. Manikchand Panachand stands as an example. Similarly, he created leaders and volunteers from various castes and

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encouraged them to initiate forming social organizations working for their own communities. Also he encouraged the organizations and movements to manage their own funds thus making them self-supporting while he himself would donate funds to such organizations only when necessary.

The Maharaja would observe and encourage men with leadership qualities so that the movements or institutions would sprint their own leaders. He applied this effective style of management to movements and institutions like *Dakshin Maharashtra Jain Parishad, Maratha Shikshan Parishad, Satyashodhak Samaj and Brahmanetar Chalwal* (non-Brahmin Movement) etc. This would make them function effectively and last longer. He expected these movements to grow and expand their fields of activities and attract more and more people to pursue their objectives. Thus he became known as a great intelligent organiser and his fame spread all over India and in the British camp.

Shahu Chhatrapati was a noble man of high principles. His aim was to achieve progress of the whole nation. But he was convinced that a nation cannot progress without development of the vast majority of the backward classes. His firm conviction was that the human race was one and all were the children of God. He therefore encouraged education and propogated the *Satyashodhak* philosophy in order to promote this ideal. Some short-sighted mendicants considered him to be anti-Brahmin and started maligning him in various ways. Most of the Brahminical newspapers also backed them. To counter these attacks he encouraged some non-Brahmin youths to launch some newspapers and thus taught them to give a spirited fight.

Ultimately, it is the policies of the Maharaja that will prove beneficial for the country. The seed of disparity in society sown by priests and the religious orthodoxy has now grown up into a massive tree. All progressive minded people of India are convinced that equality cannot prevail until this priestly class is defeated completely. Now we hear the slogan every where, "Down with priests". Maharaja's principle that the non-Brahmins, untouchables and the Muslims, all should have an equal opportunity in administering the state, is now being commonly accepted. It is a good sign that now people have realized his true worth and the misunderstandings about his objectives are vanishing. As the days pass by and his motives and contributions are properly understood by the people, they will value his thoughts all the more. He has taught us by his example the real meaning of service to the society and nation; we should etch these preachings on our hearts as a tribute to him on his death anniversary.

(Bhaskarrao Jadhav wrote this article on the thirteenth death anniversary of Shahu Maharaja published in the *Dnyan Mandir* in 1935)

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5.

Rajarshi Shahu And Crowing of His Opponents

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
National leader & Architect of Indian Constitution

"Kay karu aata dharuniya bhid, nihshank he tond wajavile;
navhejagi koni mukiyancha Jana, sarthak lajun navhe hot"

- Saint Tukaram.

(What use being reticent? / Now I shout shamelessly/
Understand, none in world stands for the dumb/
Modesty would not serve (my) interest)

In the last issue we had introduced the cunning hypocrites, looking for an opportunity to take over our freedom of political rights. Regrettably, we are obliged to introduce one more such person – opinion - in this issue. We need to clarify about how some cunning crows create unnecessary commotion over the few facilities that we have been awarded with due to the advent of western education in this twentieth century. In a normal routine, when a mother of four gives some sweets to her children, all the children may not be of the same age and strength. The stronger and the bigger children eat the whole thing. The younger ones are too small and innocent to understand that something like that sweet or anything else exists. But as these children grow and start crawling and then if the mother gives any sweets, the infant too tries to imitate their elder siblings. They too run for it. Obviously, the elders who have been used to having every good thing all for themselves do not like giving the younger his equal share. And when the younger

This article is the only one available written by Dr. Ambedkar on Shahu Maharaja in the journal *Mooknayak*, supported by Maharaja himself.

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sibling tries to fight for his equal and right share, these elder siblings not only refuse to give them the share but also create hue and cry about it. Would any mother listen to this useless noise and give up thus neglecting her younger child? No, never.

Then why, a particular society fattened on the religious and social cream, should create a hullabaloo when the socially backward and the ignorant - or rather, deliberately kept ignorant - class strives to raise its head? Perhaps, it is like that stone, which does not want another stone underneath it to slip off so as not to lose support and the stone underneath should carry its weight for ever. It is not surprising that these *Bhudevas* (Gods on the earth – Brahmins) nurture a similar idea. But can't they understand that the other society too has a soul and they too are children of the same God?

These deceitful animals forget about the presence of God in every living being and would not hesitate to put their feet on His head. But how long can this kind of repulsive behaviour carry on? Probably, only until others are fast asleep. Renowned scientist, Dr. Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose, surprised the whole world with his scientifically proven revelation that even plants have a soul and feelings just like the humans. But none of the so called Brahmins, who are the highest of all the *Varnas*, felt that we untouchables, who are considered lesser and treated worse than cats and dogs, have feelings and emotions? Or if they felt it they had no courage to tell the world. But how can they be such courageous? It requires a brave man of broad chaste to perform such courageous act. And that can be only a Kshatriya. And accordingly, a true heir of the Kshatriya clan Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja, by the shining light of his great soul, has lit the flame of self-respect among the people who were kept untouchable and therefore lifeless for centuries by the so called high castes. But our Brahmin brothers, who preach that all living beings emanate from the same soul, want to repress this movement of our emancipation. With that purpose, the whole Brahmin brigade has been maliciously attacking some ordinances issued by the Maharaja and by implication, his political policies. All the thinking people among the non-Brahmin and ostracised classes would find it extremely disgusting. Therefore to write about the venomous blabering of an insignificant newspaper like *Vidyavilas* on their crumbling class hegemony will amount to giving that paper an undue importance.

On 16th of this month, this paper has reached its lowest level by making spiteful and mischievous remarks against non-Brahmins and the untouchables in its editorial. It says,"The British government, despite following other religion, does not interfere in the social values of our system. But the Maharaja Chhatrapati, himself an Arya Maratha, unmindful of public opinion and age-old traditions, has been trying to create conflicts in the society in the name of social developments and on the strength of his power; but he can never succeed in this effort. This is a social problem and no law can ever break the customary caste system.....it does not need any law and no compulsion will be tolerated.

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Therefore it will be better if the Maharaja stays away from this dispute and let the people decide."

Now, isn't this a typical Brahmin trickery? Maharaja creating feud amongst his subjects is the most shocking accusation; is this loyalty? The *Vidyavilaskar* does not mind when the British pass the laws for abolition of Sati and remarriage of the widows. It is because these laws have proved beneficial for thousands of young Brahmin thugs who find it difficult to get wives in their own caste because of rising prices and owing to their 'un-Brahminical' habits and behaviour. The widow remarriage act has solved the problem of these holy hoodlums who claim birth directly from the mouth of Brahmadev. At least for this reason the British government has become venerable for them.

Earlier during the Vedokta episode the Maharaja was labelled as a Shudra, and now he becomes an "Arya Kshatriya Maratha", for these people because of the whip the Maharaja used on them. But at the same time they smugly advise him to desist from taking a lead in social affairs. What does all this mean? Simple, they thought that the "Arya Kshatriya" title bestowed upon him would please the Maharaja and he would instantly stop the movement!

But they must learn now that the Maharaja is not the one who will trust this touch-taboo mendicants mafia. Similarly, the radical Brahmin's love for the freedom of expression has been completely exposed with the position they took in the Pune Municipality on the resolution regarding compulsory education for all girls and boys. Who will believe in your empty prattle on freedom of speech?

They say, "The non-Brahmins can make open demands with calm and descent behaviour. Nothing can happen forcefully, and even if it does it cannot last long and will create differences amongst everyone. Today some people may support you but you have to live with the rest in the society!"

But the *Vidyavilaskar* forgot the non-Brahmins and the downtrodden who would have been frightened with such threats, are long dead. The outcastes still remember your natural and calm (?) behaviour during the Peshwa regime when you would make the *Mahars* walk with pots tied around their necks. If they were to forget this, they would be terrified by your threats and come to you asking for help. But who would ask anything from a mendicant, a *bhikshuk*? What right do they have to say 'come with open demands to us?' How come they are the proprietors of our natural rights? Why should we beg to you? Those days have passed, rather you have changed them, and thus who will pay heed to your bragging now?

The journal says , "there are no boards hanging on the hotels of non-Brahmins announcing the caste of the shopkeeper. People go and eat there. This is cheating. This cheating for eradication of the caste shows your petty minds."

Absolutely right, because the non-Brahmins are not as shameless as the Brahmins are. Do they actually care for their traditions? That seems to be the monopoly of mendicant priests with

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sacred threads. The crowd in their eating joints has now thinned but they make up their losses in other businesses like selling shoes! Is this following the customs? If it was, then they would have advised their brothers eating meat in the shops of Boharas, Muslims at Grant Road, eating with fork and knife at the south Bombay hotels or drinking Indian and foreign liquor at the Irani hotels in Pune. Doesn't this show their malicious minds? They have social dinners with Bezant, Arundel, Baptista etc. In foreign countries they eat bread and other things which are made with the dough kneaded with feet. But when they return they purify themselves by eating cow dung. What boldness! This is called moral courage!

The journal continues, "You want to crush the traditions. At Pandharpur, all but the untouchables are allowed to worship Vithoba (the deity worshipped in Maharashtra). But that is not so in Kolhapur's Mahalakshami temple. She does not belong to the Brahmins alone. People from all the castes come to worship her. You should think of these devotees, will they accept what you want? The Mahars and the Marathas do not visit Masjids of the Muslims, *bastis* of the Jains or temples of the Lingayats, then why only Mahalakshami temple?"

Why not? On one hand you say that Mahalakshami does not belong to the Brahmins alone and on the other hand object to non-Brahmins touching her. You lead us to the places of worship of the Jains and the Muslims? Don't we understand your meanness? Why this deception? You would prefer the non-Brahmins to worship Gods of other religions rather than allowing them to worship their own Gods and Goddesses ! What a machiavellian mind !

Finally, the way Sir Jagadish Chandra had to take the insults form the West, Shahu Maharaja too has had to face the fury of the arrogant and self-serving Brahmin clique. But just as Sir Jagadish Chandra punctured the balloon of the English pompous pride with his magnificent discovery, we wish and humbly request that the Maharaja too should not pay any heed to the useless crowing of these handful of people and stick to his fight for truth and equal rights. I close this chapter with the hope that he will definitely comply to our request.

[From 'Mooknayak, July 31, 1920' with acknowledgements]

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6.

Karmayogi Rajarshi Shahu

Shamrao Govindrao Desai
Satyashodhak Journalist and non-Brahmin Reformer & Activist

Rajarshi Shahu : The True Karmayogi

Inheritor of the legacy of Shivaji the Great, Rajarshi Shahu was remembered as the one who, after him, spread the spirit of freedom in the backward classes. He proved to be the true heir to Shivaji. The Brahmins who always opposed Rajarshi Shau's ideologies, do not like to offer to him the heritage of Shivaji the notion behind it is by doing so we offend the dignity of the great founder of the Maratha State. But these are not the new enemies of Shahu. They are Shahu's *sanatan*, age-old enemies! Ancestors of these enemies had tried to label Shivaji as *shudra*. Not just this but these people have always tortured the Mahatmas and the greats alike. Who vilified Gautam Buddha and his great religion? Therefore the *bahujan* classes should never consider a person bad whom the Brahmins always criticize. And if unfortunately they do believe the Brahmins, then they are doomed....

Like most other areas the Brahmins have hijacked the literary world. Therefore their praises do count and the Brahmins do not miss a single opportunity to praise the wealthy and the powerful. In such a situation, when most of the Rajas in Maharashtra were ensnared by the

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Shamrao Govindrao Desai was famous as a non-Brahmin journalist and a dedicated Satyashodhak. He prop agated Shahu's work in the southern parts of Maharashtra like Belgaum, Ajra and Chandagarh. In 1921 he started the newspaper 'Rashtraveer' with encouragement from the Maharaja. Later he became the editor of the paper in 1928 and stayed on the post till 1960. The article is a compilation of his important editorials commemorating death anniversaries of the Maharaja.

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Brahmins and indulged Chanakyan politicking, it was Rajarshi Shahu who within few years of becoming the king, attacked the key elements Brahminism. The whole Brahmin class of India was enraged like a mad elephant attacked by a lion on his forehead. The Brahmin rage would not matter much if they controlled religion alone, but during that time the reins of the Kolhapur State were also in the hands of the Brahmins. In this situation attacking Brahminism meant losing everything you possesed. But the Maharaja continued his task till the end. No other person in India dared to attack the Brahmins.

Equally praiseworthy is the way he worked for backward class people outside his state and made them aware of their political rights. It is impossible for ordinary state rulers to understand the craving for political power. In fact it is quite natural if they think that power should be absolute and despotic. Thus, despite all these adversities, that Rajarshi Shahu tried to root the idea of people's power in the backward classes of the neighbouring areas of his state is something surprising and worth pondering over. This was not possible without his big and noble heart.

Some might allege that Rajarshi Shahu brought about political awakening among the bahujan masses at the behest of his masters, the British Government, in oder to thwart the radical movements of the Brahmins in larger Maharashtra. On the surface, the accusation sounds plausible. But the backward classes and the non-Brahmin party are not a puppets in somebody's hands who would move only when the strings move! And why only in Maharashtra? If the British had such a diabolical scheme, they could have created such puppet movements all over India. The allegation is simply baselss. If, during the non-cooperation movement these people would have been used as recruits by force, then the above statement would stand some chance; but efforts were made by Rajarshi, from the roots, to create a political awareness and hunger for power among these people.

Rajarshi sponsored newspapers to be published but never forced them to follow a particular ideology in political arena. The *Rashtraveer* too was supported by him and during his career he never showed any pleasure or displeasure when sometimes he was criticized for some specific reason. This means, he never bought the editors by sponsoring the news papers. In fact, he listened to their criticisms published by various newspapers, sponsored by him, with all ears. Thus, if he had tried to create political awareness amongst the downtrodden, with inspiration from the British Government, then the newspapers like the *Rashtraveer* would never have that freedom of expression. Another mischievous prapaganda, that the non-Brahmin party was formed by the British Government with his mediation, is baseless too. How come in Madras region too a non-Brahmin party has burgeoned without his intervention?

Thus, upliftment of backward classes and the downtrodden has been the only inspiration behind Shahu Maharaja's mission to create political awareness among them. Why did Mr. Tilak not make such efforts? He shirked the responsibility of social reforms under the

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pretext that social and political reforms could not go hand in hand. How much has the Congress tried to create hunger for political rights among the backward classes in the past 30 years of freedom movement? The bahujan samaj could not progress beyond pulling Tilak's chariot on occassional processions and shouting slogans, "Tilak Maharaj ki Jai". And if at all Tilak did make some efforts, that was for his own gain of expanding his political ambition. But what was Shahu Maharaja to gain in his little principality from growing political awareness and ambitions among these people?

Thus, it is amply obvious that it was out of his genuine commitment to amelioration of the downtrodden that the Maharaja poured his money and enormous energy into the movement. Therefore we call him a true *karmayogi.* He could have led a peaceful and luxurious life just in his own state. But he helped develop the non-Brahmin party even while rescueing his state from the Brahmin siege A real *karmayogi.* Naturally, Shahu Chhatrapati's name and fame will forever shine in Maharashtra.

May 21,1929

Rajarshi Shahu and Self Rule

Broadly speaking, education combined with self-respect are the seeds of democratic freedom. If some one genuinely endeavours to uplift the masses by means of education and cultivating self-respect, then he should be considered as the true champion of democratic freedom. If so, Rajarshi Shahu can be said to be a more genuine champion of India's freedom than those who violently waved the banner of patriotism shouting hoarsely, "*swarajya maaza janmasiddha hakka aahe*" (Swarajya is my birthright). Therefore it is necessary to study how he spent his time, energy and money to educate the illiterate and create a sense of self-respect amongst them.

Being a king, there was nothing extraordinary in his starting a few primary schools and highschools in his territory. But his unique venture was in founding hostels for students from all the castes and classes, which was never done in the whole of India ever. There are larger and wealthier principalities in India than Shahu's Kolhapur state. But nowhere we find any state capital having hostels for students from different castes such as Maratha, Jain, lingayat, Namdeo, Saraswat , untouch-able, Prabhu, Muslim and so on.

Some will question its benefits and argue that it has only strengthened and protected the caste system. Those who have benefited from these hostels should answer this question. Rajarshi had established different hostels for different social groups and those groups are still taking benefits of these hostels. But in British India, we have hundreds of proofs to show that children from these social groups are denied admissions to schools and colleges on the pretext that there is no room for them. If he had built only one hostel in Kolhapur, only upper classes would have benefited. Non-Brahmins who can now afford education would not have that facility for the next 25 years. Today there are hundreds of non-Brahmin scholars found all over Maharashtra who had benefitted from Kolhapur hostels. No one coming out of

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these boardings is casteist. On the contrary, most of them turned social reformers. One hostel for students of all castes could not have achieved this. In such a hostel, majority upper class students would have influenced the others and today's non-Brahmin graduates would have become the followers of these Brahmin *Chanakyas.*

Thus the credit of spreading education among the *bahujan samaj* goes solely to Rajarshi. Many newspapers started with his encouragement and patronage were never directed by him what to write and what not. Some of these fiercely supported freedom movement. That was because Rajarshi himself was very keen on India's freedom.

Rajarshi Shahu's efforts to instill self-respect among the *bahujan samaj* has been his unprecedented contribution to Maharashtra's social life. Kemal Pasha dissolved the *khilafat* when he found that it was an obstacle to progress. Likewise, when Rajarshi found that the Brahmin-dominated religious *peethas* like white ants were destroying the self-respect and humanity of the *bahujan samaj*, he severed relations with them. Some say that even if he drove away the Brahmin *jagadguru* and priests, he replaced them with *Kshatra-dharmaguru* and priests of his own caste. The argument is irrelevant. If he were a sovereign like Kemal Pasha, he would have destroyed the entire *dharmapeeth* system.

Rajarshi Shahu denied the hegemony of the uncontrolled and traditional *dharmapeethas* and priests and replaced them by people's *peethas* and priests. This required extra-ordinary courage. With such actions, he gave the *bahujan samaj* the religious freedom. This ignited their thirst for political freedom. This is manifested in these people's desire to send their own representatives in the elected bodies such as grampanchayats, municipalities, local boards and legislatures. The *bahunjan samaj* today is not prepared to accept the leadership of the upper castes because they now realise that this would hamper their progress. Likewise, when they will realise the evil of the alien rule, they would not want this rule to continue forever.

There is a large body of evidence to show that Rajarshi cherished political freedom and democratic rights of the People. He told the *Maratha Shikshan Parishad* at Khamgaon in 1917, "I am proud to be called a soldier, a peasant or a worker. My parents were farmers. Many advise me not to associate with lowly ignorant people. But the love for the peasants and workers runs through my blood. I was born among them." These beautiful and timeless thoughts have their origin in Rajarshi's uncontaminated love for people's power. Some evil *Chankyas* will promptly ask as to whether these thoughts reflect love for democracy. Think calmly and objectively and you will find it. In his heart was the seed of Bolshevism, the people's power. What else does his genuine love for the peasants and workers mean?

Rajarshi continned, "I wish, the country must get freedom. At the same time, I insist we must do everything to break the shackles of the caste system to become eligible for enjoying freedom in its true sense. If the caste discrimination remains, freedom will give power in the

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hands of the few. Some people question the connection between untouchability and politics. I say, what is politics if we cannot treat the 'untouchables' like ordinary human beings? The service to the country will be meaningless unless we are able to give every man his human rights."

On another occasion Rajarshi says, "The higher castes who have been enjoying their hereditary rights from ancient times should themselves renounce these rights. Such purity of action would lay down an example for others." Rajarshi was not content with merely mouthing his thoughts. He tried hard to bring them in practice.

Rajarshi reserved 50 per cent government jobs for the backward classes, ensured representation to all castes in the representative institutions, abolished untouchability, gave sanads of Law to Mahars and Mangs. All these actions intended to orient the *bahujan samaj* towards freedom. As the Rajarshi said, the purpose of giving them these sanads was to open for them the doors of professions which the orthodox tradition had closed for them. He felt that this would enhance their status and they would feel as equal human beings in the society. Thus, he was actively infusing the spirit of democracy among all castes and creeds. To say that he was not is a fallacy. Then who are the democrats? The Brahmins? Brahmins who nourished the caste system and untouchability; who opposed compulsory education; who arrogantly opposed Maratha's entry in the legislature saying 'legislature was not farm field for hoeing and sowing, not a shop for Vaishya-Wanis'; who manipulated to keep the social and religious power in their hands; who merely mouthed slogans like 'swarajya is my birthright'?

Mahatma Gandhi says freedom cannot be achieved unless we abolish untouchability and make unity among Hindus and Muslims. Rajarshi had said it 25 years ago. That the preaching of these two great men were not in vain is evident today. Thus, we appeal to the whole nation to follow the Rajarshi's advice that if we want freedom, we must first allow every man in India to enjoy the basic human rights. Those who call such a man (Shahu) a traitor to freedom and who hate democracy and yet proclaim themselves as patriots and say that social reforms should be made only after political freedom, are themselves enemies of freedom. We know that our *'Chanakya'* patriots cannot swallow this advice. They want Swarajya only for their own caste. And like a thief they shout against a true soldier of freedom. But their efforts will not succeed because the Rajarshi has now given voice to millions of people who were kept dumb by them. It is therefore logical that Rajarshi's life and work will always be extolled by the *bahujan samaj* and by those who understand the politics of India...

May 6, 1930

Shahu and amelioration of Bahujan Samaj

A formidable destroyer of Brahminism, the Rajarshi was also a humane physician out to cure the *bahujan samaj* afflicted with ignorance and poverty. His diagnosis was sharp and

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faultless, the medicines he prescribed were sure remedies.

The nation faces the difficult question of amelioration of the *bahujan samaj*. That is why the Indian leaders have entrusted the question of caste representation to the Prime Minister of England. Because none of the Indian leaders seems to know the cure. Lord Irwin, who knows India well, had sincerely opined that it was not proper that the Congress ignored the interests of large social groups while arguing for its own rights. Such a specific objection on the motives of the Congress expressed by a responsible high officer like Lord Irwin should be taken seriously. In this context, it is obvious that Rajarshi Shahu's contribution in improving the lot of the common people is far greater than that of the Congress. Intelligent people will realise that as time passes, Rajarshi's greatness will shine ever more.

Rajarshi Shahu had realised early in his mission that mere education would not enhance the social status of the backward castes. In 1902 he issued an order while in Europe which expressed his distress that the more backward castes had not benefitted much from the State's educational endeavours and that the fruits of higher education were not evenly distributed among all sections. To change this situation and to encourage all sections to take to higher education, he, by this order reserved fifty per cent of jobs falling vacant for backward class candidates.

This decision was the key to amelioration of the *bahujan samaj*. There can be much controversy on this, though. But most social experts in the world are now convinced that the society cannot evenly progress unless different social groups are represented in the governance of state according to their demographic strength. That is why the British rulers are trying to take recourse of some safeguards in India. One should humbly bow before Rajarshi's vision. The Muslims, the 'untouchables' and the non-Brahmins today insist on castewise representation, separate electorates or reserved constituencies. Their aim is to obtain appropriate share in the state's governance.

The present government has actively approved this stand. The Muslims of the Bombay Presidency have demanded the education portfolio in the cabinet on the grounds that the Muslims are backward in education. The government, by appointing Rafiuddin Mohammed as education minister has supported their contention. The Anglo-Indian group, though capable of guarding its own interests, is very jealous in guarding its rights.

Turkey is a secular progressive state and yet there is a rule which obliges even the foreign companies to have 30 percent Turks in their employment. Today's National Congress used to pass strong resolutins 30 to 35 years ago demanding Indianisation of government services. Now Liberal Federation and the Hindu Mahasabha are doing it. Indeed, the Congress appointed Subhashchandra Bose as the Commissioner of Calcutta Municipal Corporation when the party captured the civic body. All this shows that the government jobs are not merely for the upkeep of the employees' families. These are the steps for sharing political power. Enjoying a share of power helps social amelioration.

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The minority communities like Brahmins and Kayasthas today are well-established because of their large share in the government jobs. How apt is the Rajarshi's definition of government jobs: rewards of higher education. That is why if the poor backward classes do not have the incentive of government jobs, they will not be inclined to go in for costly higher education. That is also why the Rajarshi's decision of reserving government posts for various backward classes is unique. It has given a tremendous boost to the progress of the *bahujan samaj.*

The principle of class-wise representation in the government services was first adopted and implemented in Kolhapur State and the principle was approved in British India much later. The non-Brahmin parties while demanding class-wise representation in the Madras Presidency were following Rajarshi Shahu's example. Unfortunately, the principle is not implemented in British India because of opposition of the Brahmins. And even if the Brahmins oppose this policy as a regressive one, in the current situation it is the most practical and inevitable step that a state can take for equitable distribution of power among various sections of the people.

Can any one say that it is only because of their intrinsic merit that the Brahmins and the Kayasthas occupy 90 per cent of the government jobs today? Undoubtedly, a large number of them were inducted in the service on casteist considerations and nepotism. There is no point in pressing the point of merit. Will the people like Mahatma Gandhi who believe in universal brotherhood, employ Europeans in free India's government services saying that Europeans are more intelligent than Indians? Merit is only a convenient argument for the Brahmins. Can any one claim that the the Kolhapur State's governance has degenerated because the Rajarshi has implemented the poloicy of class-wise reservations? On the contrary, Rajarshi Shahu's policy and policies of the present Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaja in this regard have been immensely successful. The moderate Brahmin editor of *Dnyanprakash* , an inveterate critic of Kolhapur State, has also certified this fact in his report saying that during the reign of the present King, the Kolhapur State has progressed substantially in terms of peace, law and order, as well as material development and awareness of the people.

This also shows that the criticism of the reservation policy so far has been a result of a prejudice and there was no truth in it. India has two classes of people, developed and backward.To add, there are astounding caste differences. In such an atmosphere, class-wise reservations are necessary for all round progress. And yet, these manipulative Brahmins were opposed to this policy. Despite their resistance, it is creditable that Shahu Maharaja implemented this progressive policy thirty years ago. Therefore one can say that Maharaja has been the true liberator of the non-Brahmins and backward classes all over India. He thus took to his breast all those people who were disabled and unempowered.

May 17, 1932

(From 'Rashtraveer' with acknowledgements)

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7.

Rajarshi Shahu - A Royal Revolutionary

Dhananjay Keer
Renowned Biographer of Shahu

Shahu was indeed a man of boundless courage, phenomenal energy and strength. In all his dealings his very human and noble character was manifest. He felt more fellowship and brotherhood with the deserted and the downtrodden than with saints and with the privileged of society. To him, the liberation of the Depressed and the Oppressed was the highest goal of action; and the one great aim of his legislation was to give them full rights of equality and liberty. Neither threats nor open enmity could dissuade him from his noble resolve. Without a doubt Shahu was more courageous than most of the Indian social reformers of his times.

As a practical man, Shahu knew the value of men and things and easily detected the viles of sycophants and the flattery of friends and the strategies of enemies. He suffered fools, but when flatterers took liberties with him, he, like the elephant in 'the story of the elephant and the cock', frightened them off unceremoniously. When driven to despair he used the tactics of tit for tat and rose to the occasion magnificently.

Shahu's was a grand personality. His face was, like the face of Mahatma Phooley, full of humanity. His eyes glowed with love of humanity which was denied to the suppressed and the underdog. His thick lower lip was suggestive of passion and pleasures which he enjoyed in his youth, but his generosity, wisdom and noble aim overcame the lust, and the love of power and pelf.

Shahu believed more in love than in strength or power. That is why he could conquer even fierce animals. At Delhi, in February 1922, a tigress had killed the manager of the circus. On hearing the news, Shahu bought her and with the magic touch of his love turned her into a tame, docile and devoted domestic animal. It has been already noted how

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Shahu cheered and helped Rashingkar, a leader in the opposite camp, when he was on his death-bed. Tilak had threatened him with death. Yet he sent his men to Poona to bring Tilak to Miraj for treatment. Shahu said that his fight with Tilak resembled the fight between Prithviraj Chavan and his uncle who fought with each other ferociously on the battlefield by daytime, but the same evening dined in the same plate at the call of the older man. Devoted to his wife and son, Shahu enjoyed a happy home life. It sustained him throughout his lifelong social conflicts he waged.

Shahu did not live between wine and women. Alcohol he did not consume in any form, not even in medicine. He preferred abstinence to temperance. He may have been tempted, but he did not fall. The best field has weed. Yet in that respect he was better than most of the leaders who wickedly maligned him. Had Shahu been as blameless in character as Tilak, still he would not have escaped calumny. Tilak could not escape calumny so long as the British rulers of India maliciously tried to make him a Parnell. The real crime of Shahu was not his moral conduct. The leaders of the vested interests and the priests hated him not for his sins but for his virtues which were reflected in his mission for the liberation of the Depressed and the Suppressed from social slavery, social inequality, and in his fight for human dignity, equal opportunities and human rights. What the Indian Republic has been fighting for, viz. transforming the political democracy into a social and economic one as laid down in the guiding principles of the Indian Constitution, Shahu fought for fifty years ago.

Most of Shahu's despisers and detracters were Brahmin lawyers, whose roofs were covered with the skin of their litigants and who had no real wish to make the world better. Their ideas of society and its range were narrow and selfish. They had knowledge without true wisdom and courage without moral heroism. They indulged in false ideas of holiness and in scriptural pride. Shahu had his foibles and failings which will be burnt up in the furnace of time and history will honour him for his love of humanity.

Shahu was well read, well informed and always showed judgment, talent and astuteness in the discharge of his multifarious duties. As an administrator, he was able and efficient and was a delightful colleague to work with. He had appointed an Inspector of Orders to record and watch the execution of his orders and disposal of complaints, petitions and schemes. He believed in modern agriculture and modern industrial development, and in building vast dams for irrigation and in starting co-operative societies to help the farmers and workers. On account of this stupendous work he was aptly called the Father of the Green Revolution in India! His strict rules governing the conduct of State officers, the service rules devised to weed out corruption and maladministration, the liberal and progressive legislations on *devasthans*, the inheritance rights, the Kulkarni vatans, the abolition of untouchability, equality of men before the law and the codification of the Hindu Law, all prove that Shahu was a great and successful administrator

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and ruler of his day.

It was Shahu's belief that the peace, progress and prosperity of India depended on the elevation of the Backward and Depressed Classes. He aimed at the integration and consolidation of the national interests. It was the missions of his life to take these classes out of their morass, and he considered that his sacred duty to humanity. He experienced a sort of spiritual sentiment that goaded him on to fulfil this mission.

With this end in view, Shahu made his famous declaration: "To enthrone Indian nation, we must dethrone Brahminism" which divided society and bred ideas of highness and lowness and poverty for the masses on the basis of birth. He, therefore, strove to abolish the caste system and liberate the lower classes from mental slavery, social stigma and degradation. According to him, to dissolve caste was a necessity and to uphold caste was a sin. He, therefore, preached the need to foster the corporate and co-operative spirit. It was his conviction that any institution in the country, a Municipality or a village panchayat, would not be able to function smoothly and efficiently so long as it was not free from caste influence. He shouted at the top of his voice at conferences that it was shameless on the part of a leader to call himself a leader if he considered his countrymen and brethren as worse than cowdung and beasts. "Those who take part in politics must treat men as men," he thundered.

In his own way Shahu, like Buddha and Ashok, tried to humanise religion. President V. V. Giri, delivering a speech in Bombay on the occasion of Shahu's birth-centenary, appreciated Shahu's great services to the nation when he said that "Shahu was first and foremost a great emancipator and a true servant of the downtrodden."It was a fitting description of a great leader who said "Our rise depends upon the elevation of the masses."

Shahu's struggle for reducing the disparity between the privileged and the underprivileged, was described by the leaders of the vested interests as casteism, a work of disharmony and disgrace. If a Brahmin thinks of removing this disparity between man and man, he is called a social reformer, but if a non- Brahmin does it sincerely, he is denounced as a communalist who foments division in society.

Shahu often acted up to the instructions of the Resident under pressure and not with pleasure. He was an astute leader. While dealing with the British Government, he always pretended simplicity and artlessness. But under his simplicity and artlessness there was sagacity and astuteness. What Shahu wrote to Holkar was very suggestive of his shrewd and cautious nature.

Shahu advised Holkar that his outspokenness and straightforwardness in dealing with the British Government might be the cause of his ruin, and he added: "Virtue is not always admired in this world."

The British Resident had his spies to watch over Shahu's activities and often Shahu outwitted them. When he was found out, he wrote in an apologetic tone,

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made a show of his loyalty by talking aggressively and disdainfully of the nationalists and tried to wriggle out of the situation. But Shahu too had his spies to keep watch on the Resident, and got secret information about him. During a talk with the British Resident, a certain high dignitary raised some delicate questions which were difficult for the Resident to answer. When that dignitary met Shahu, the ruler skilfully turned the conversation to those difficult questions and replied to them. The guest was taken aback.

Functioning as he was under duress and limitations of a dependent ruler, Shahu could not take active part in the freedom struggle, though he fearlessly declared Swaraj as the goal of India. In early twenties even Mahatma Gandhi was not prepared to define Swaraj as complete independence. Except the revolutionary party led by Savarkar, no other party had declared complete independence as its goal. Mahatma Gandhi said in Young India on January 3, 1922, that "it would be religiously unlawful for us to insist upon independence, for it would be vindictive and petulent. It would be a denial of God." In 1921, even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru dissociated himself with a resolution which Hazarat Mohani moved at the Ahmedabad Congress, declaring complete independence as its goal. Gandhi opposed this resolution.

Shahu's idea of Swaraj was not of a geographical nature, but aimed at broadening the base of democracy and enlarging the scope of Indian nationalism. His advocacy of the rights of the Backward and Depressed Classes and of their rightful share in the administration was misrepresented by the Maharashtrian Congress leaders.

Shahu was a good, wise and enlightened ruler, tolerant of all faiths. "In any other country," said a writer with good judgment, "he would have been an idol of all who recognised social advance as the just step to political progress." His educational policy has been the inspiration of numerous social workers; his liberty in social matters reasserted and revived the new era inaugurated by Mahatma Phooley long before.

Sympathy for human life was Shahu's watchword and it proved to be a great moral and motive force. In reality he even risked his crown in his attempt to elevate the masses and he rightly tried to ensure the moral as well as material welfare of his subjects. His ultimate aim was much wider. His was a wiser, saner and more tolerant outlook. According to the definition of a great man given by Plekhanov in 'The Role of the Individual in History', Shahu was a great man. While explaining how exceptional men play their role in history, Plekhanov observes in his essay that a great man is great because "he possesses qualities which make him most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arise as a result of general and particular causes. ... A great man is precisely a beginner, because he sees farther than others and desires more strongly than others."

Undoubtedly, Shahu saw farther than most of his contemporaries and desired the elevation of the lower classes more keenly and strongly than others. History is made by a great social man and like a great man Shahu was the product of the

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social forces that pressed for a new social order. Shahu and Dr. Nair were the rebels in India who were responsible for the social unrest in India in the first quarter of the twentieth century. No other Indian ruler was as great a social as well as public figure as Shahu was. His heart bled and his eyes were often dim with tears for the suppressed.

The secret of Shahu's success was his noble aim and selfless work. He once said that the crown was to be held in reality and rightly for the people to ensure moral and material triumph of the government and he acted accordingly.

Shahu played his historic role magnificently in the construction of a new society and a better world. It was a noble drama in which conquest of dehumanising evils was made by shining principles of humanism, replacing darkness with light. Plato visualised a time when philosophers would be kings. He did not foresee the day when Princes would be social revolutionaries.

Shahu visualised a new social order based on equality and liberty, that is, based on reason, a pattern of a future Indian society. His philosophy of enthroning labour, of annihilating untouchability root and branch, and of raising the status of the common man, has come to Free India in the ideal of social and economic democracy as enunciated in the guiding principles of the Indian Constitution.

Shahu was indeed a man of great soul, a man of simple greatness and a people's social philosopher. After the death of Mahatma Phooley he rekindled the lamp of hope in the hearts of millions of untouchables and the lower classes. This achievement alone entitled him to a high place in Indian history. He was a ruler who dreamed of a labour Government in India, a leader who said that mills and factories should not go into the hands of capitalists and millionaires, but should remain in the hands of the people. He was a ruler who lighted the eternal lamp of education which shines all over Maharashtra. He was a Prince who believed in the dictum that peace had its victories more renowned than war.

Hence with the increasing success of the social and economic democracy in India, Shahu's figure will shine brighter. He will be ever remembered by the people with gratitude and affection. His name will be written in gold in the history of India. Man plays several roles in his life. With his indomitable, unselfish and ascetic soul, Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati proved to be the greatest ruler in Maharashtra since Shivaji the Great. He was indeed a great social man, a royal revolutionary, a supporter of democratic journalism, a promoter of Indian music, a builder of the Marathi stage, a patron of wrestling, a maker of modern Maharashtra, the Father of the Green Revolution in India and one of the founders of social and economic democracy in India.

(From '*Shahu Chhatrapati - ARoyal Revolutionary*' with acknowledgements)

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8.

Chhatrapati Shahu : A People's God

Dr. A. H. Salunkhe
Scholar of culture, religion and philosophy

Baliraja and Chhatrapati Shahu

'Charvak Darshan' of ancient India is a completely different stream of philosophy in which I am deeply involved . This school has denied the existence of God whether divine or in the form of superman. But if one insists on believing in God, then Charvak advocates that "the one approved by the people is the God". If a Charvak school philosopher is asked to name one such king, he would instantly mention Baliraja or one of his dynastic heirs. I would agree. If asked for its illustration in modern age, I would unhesitatinbgly name Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja.

'God' is merciless and partisan

Who needs God and why? The powerful and the wealthy do not need God much. The helpless, the orphaned and the weak need a strong support to negotiate through life full of hardships. God gives power to the poor to do that. They worship their God, pray to him and lay their life before him.

Howsoever strong their faith in God, whatever sacrifices they make in his name, howsoever numerous and deep their prayers, this so-called God is never found helping the poor. They suffer poverty, inequality and disease; they are battered by natural and man-made calamities; and on many occasions completely destroyed. On the other hand, the wealthy and the powerful, living in the dark depths of sheer immorality and perpetrating injustice, appear to enjoy all the advantages of life happily.

Now if God, who must witness this, keeps quiet, then surely, he must be merciless and partisan. Charvak says neither do we need to worship such a God nor accept his existence.Even if we deny God, the

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fact remains that common people need some solace. And so in real life, one who wipes tears of the poor, provides for their daily meal, provides for education, affords them opportunities to live a healthy life, helps flower their creativity, ends discrimination and injustices against them and who treats all human beings as equal, is God.

Chhatrapati's moral Godliness

Undeniably, every moment of Shahu's life passes this test. His Godliness was not religious or spiritual. Neither was it other-wordly, *paaramarthik* nor super-manly . It was completely realistic at social, moral and human level. It did not indulge in mysterious miracles. It was that Godliness which returned human dignity to those whose very humanity was robbed by others.

India had no dearth of kings, princes, sardars and jahagirdars who with the priestly class basely enjoyed the murky pleasures of life. To exploit the week with the help of the powerful is a happy course of life without tensions. Chhatrapati Shahu deliberately refused to chart this course. He refused to join hands with the powerful to preserve his kingdom. By design he denied the greatness bestowed on him by the tradition and decided to stand shoulder to shoulder with the poor and powerless. It was an exceptional and a scintillating moment in India's social history. Shahu's decision proved that only those who lived life of social justice had the right to speak on it.

Faith in man's potential

Quality has no relationship with birth oriented *varna*, caste, family or prestige. Merit depends more on opportunities afforded. Those who remained ignorant and poor (for generations) change when doors of opportunities open for them. Their creativity blooms; the worm metamorphoses into a butterfly; ignorant becomes a pundit, fool a scholar; social scum is transformed into an elite and an uncultured into a cultured person. This was the sum and substance of Shahu's philosophy which he translated in real life by judiciously using his royal powers instead of merely paying lip service to it. Throughout his life, he endeavoured to bring about a multi-dimensional development of the people's life by implementing numerous schemes - primary education, girls' education, education for *dalits*, reservation in education and jobs as also boarding houses for the students of *dalit* and the oppressed classes, fight against untouchability, amelioration of the 'criminal castes', development of trade, industry, enterprise, agriculture, irrigation and so on.

Shahu firmly believed in man's capabilities. Even a person regarded stupid, inefficient and incompetent, possesses boundless potential, competence and merit of high quality and uncanny genius, he believed. However, Shahu felt that social leaders and the people in high places must possess the vision and the will to understand and nurse this genius. An event in Shahu's life which reveals his vision and his determination to provide opportunities to the oppressed needs to be recounted. Shahu appointed a backward caste person as a clerk in the office of a high caste judge.The judge was displeased and began sneering at the clerk's

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inefficiency. He harassed the clerk by finding faults, slapping fines and holding over his salary. When Shahu enquired, the Judge said the man had no capacity to learn. Shahu retorted, what if the judge's salary was held up on the ground that he was incompetent to teach the lowly clerk his work? That clicked. The judge finally relented. Shahu thus made his point that any person if given opportunity, coached properly and helped to build self-confidence could function efficiently in a difficult job.

Hard Work

Being a sensitive person, Shahu had a mature sense of justice. He sympathized with the victims of injustice and exploitation. His heart ached for their upliftment. His emotional involvement matched his will to help the downtrodden. He worked hard throughout his life to use his power to open avenues for upliftment of the poor and the oppressed.. For the *bahujan samaj* he created a new world illuminated with justice. He created a new society.

Sensitivity, sympathy and pity are not enough to create a new society. The exploiting class in the society feels that its importance will be reduced and the majority will demand a share of the pleasures if the poor are given opportunities of progress. It repeatedly suppresses the attempts of the lower classes to climb up and at the same time employs all tactics to destroy those who help the lower classes come up. To stand by the poor is to invite enmity of those who propser at the cost of the poor. These are powerful wealthy people with a firm grip on the social life. They are drunk with power, insensitive and cruel without any moral scruples. Those who sympathize with the poor have to bear the brunt of their wrath. The greatness of Shahu is that he stood firm on his course, suffered the berating of this class, swallowed defamation and faced the cacophony of pervert propaganda. Many attempts were made on his life. And many happily celebrated his demise.

Shahu swallowed the poisonous outcry of the elites on the strength of his moral courage, deep commitment to the principle of equality, and will to follow words with effective action. By swallowing this poison he shielded the poor from a more deadly poisonous attack.He illuminated the lives of the poor and made them happy. He removed the thorns on the path of the poor and spread a few flowers on the way. The quality of their life changed. He created an awareness among them that they had the right to dream. Today, the robust stream of the downtrodden majority is like a mammoth river in spate moving ahead freely with great speed . The credit goes to that great human being , Shahu Maharaja, guileless and pure of heart. The smile on our lips is his creation. We have not seen the divine God. But without doubt, Shahuraja was our God, consecrated by the people, who regarded people's hardships and woes as his own, who gave a helping hand to those mired in the social muck and who accomplished things we expect from the so-called God.

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9.

Rajarshi Shahu : A Beacon of Manly Virtues

Dr. Janardan Waghmare
Litterateur and former Vice Chancellor of Swami Ramanand Tirth University

Rajarshi Shahu's life reminds me of Shelley's poem "Ode to the West Wind" where the poet expresses his thoughts and sentiments in a profound and beautiful language on the stormy winds rushing from the West. I feel Shahu's stormy life and manly character is a perfect manifestation of Shelley's poetic description. The images the poet uses to carry the gigantic force of the West Wind , can best be employed to describe Shahu's revolutionary life and work. The poem is penned by the one who is possessed by the intense desire for a social revolution. The poet welcomes the stormy wind that disperses the rotten yellow leaves of the past to sow the fresh seeds of a new life on this earth. The poet describes the wind, which brings the message of tomorrow's free world , as "the trumpet of a prophecy". The stormy wind is an image of an all-round revolution.

In history, such storms are found to have had their incarnations in human body. Revolutionaries have often shaken this world like roaring storms. Rajarshi Shahu was one such human incarnation of a great stormy wind. Shahu threw away the tendencies that extolled the sickly and rotten rituals, that perpetrated social slavery by imposing the hegemony of *varnas*, to ensconce the higher values of liberty, equality and fraternity in Maharashtra. This storm raged on Maharashtra's rugged terrain for 28 years. Its sweep was gigantic and speed immense. Albert Camus has said that a revolution is born in the realm of thought. When new progressive thoughts surge forward to clash with the old regressive ideas, there lies the spark of revolution.

The first sparks of social revolution flew in Maharashtra through Mahatma Phule's action-oriented thinking. One such spark transformed into a burning flame called Shahu Maharaja. He fiercely attacked the

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Brahmins who controlled the people's minds for thousands of years and who perpetrated social inequality in the name of religion. He broke down the stone walls of prison called religion and culture and used his power to release people from this prison. He broke the cultural shackles with which their hands and feet were bound. Shahu fully employed the power of his *kshatriyahood* and skillfully deployed strategies to wage a great social battle....

His ideals and thoughts were shaped by Sir S. M. Fraser, his English teacher. Shahu can be described as the 'man of destiny'. But the point to note is that Shahu himself was the architect of his own destiny. While proudly recalling the contribution of Shahu, Frazer says, "Shahu Maharaja was a ray of light that illuminated the world in the darkness".

On taking over the reins of the state, Shahu prepared himself to speed up the state's chariot in the direction of religious freedom, social equality, economic reforms and the light of knowledge through educational development. The *Bahujan Samaj* of Maharashtra had not progressed much on this road which was full of potholes. The path was lost in darkness for generations....

Shahu had to face many problems when he took over the reins. How to lead the people, condemned by the Brahmins as *shoodra* and *ati-shoodra*, from darkness to light? How to restore their social and religious rights? How to improve their economic conditions and enhance the quality of their life? Shahu was convinced that his state would not progress unless he dealt with these problems. He was always conscious that destiny had made him heir to Chhatrapati Shivaji's throne and that he must be equal to the challenge . He was fully aware of the content and meaning of Shiaji's administration and he was determined to translate the same by concrete steps. He ruled over the state all the time conscious of this "tryst with destiny".

It was the people's throne and the kingdom's true owners were the people; it was Shahu's duty to meticulously nurse the kingdom and enhance its status. That was the understanding of Shahu of his destiny. And thus his rule of 28 years was truly the "people's era' . He believed he had the blessings of Shivaji Maharaja. Shahu was fully aware of Shivaji's contribution and in respect of social revolution, he even outpaced his idol.

Shahu was fiercely resisted by the priestly class and the bureaucracy which denied him cooperation when he began dealing with the sensitive issues. His progressive policies hurt their vested interests. Conflict was inevitable. The holy *ghats* of the river Panchaganga were reserved only for Brahmins and prohibited to all others. Shahu opened the ghats for all in 1900. Non-Brahmins had no right to rituals according to the Vedas. Shahu organized in 1901 an important *Vedokta* ritual of "Shravani" which is annual consecration of the sacred threads (which the Marathas being Kshatriya also insisted on wearing as a matter of right).

Soon the *Vedokta* controversy had begun to rage. The priests did not acknowledge Shahu as Kshatriya and considered him a *shoodra*. Tilak meddled in the controversy supporting the orthodoxy. Shahu fought this battle for self-respect till he triumphed in 1905. The episode raised throughout Maharashtra a

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wave of anger intensified by the protest movement of the Satyashodhak Samaj. Shahu abolished the priestly *Watans* and encouraged non-Brahmins to perform religious rituals on their own. This proved to be a death-knell for the Brahmin hegemony. The monopolists of *Varna* finally surrendered.

After the *Vedokta* episode, Shahu undertook on a large scale various schemes for all round development of the state including spread of education. He was determined to unleash the forces of science and technology to bring about desired progress on the Western model. He built a dam on Bhogawati river in 1908 which helped pioneer the green revolution in the state. He established a new market yard to facilitate adequate prices for agricultural produce. A new township, Jaysingpur, was founded by him to promote trade and industry and traders from outside the Kolhapur principality were invited to set up their business. To take the state's agricultural produce to the markets outside the state, he built the Kolhapur-Miraj railway. Indeed, Shahu described himself as a peasant and a soldier and guided the farm and industrial workers in right direction. He encouraged innovative experiments in and promoted modernization of agriculture. He sent his son to Allahabad and England specifically to learn about agirucltural science. That the Maharaja promoted agricultural credit cooperatives goes to show his longer vision.

He turned his efforts to spread education into a gigantic campaign. He knew the prevalence of poverty, ignorance and spread of superstition was caused by the fact that generations of peasants were kept away from education. Phule had argued that the *Bahujan Samaj* lost its wisdom, morality, dynamism and material well-being only because it was denied access to education and knowledge. Shahu laid emphasis on education for the backward castes with priority. He built boarding houses for students of various castes and donated handsome sums to educational institutions outside his state. He considered education as the most important tool of social reform and gave dignity to the common people. Without Shahu , rural Maharashtra today would have presented an altogether different scenario.

Shahu made primary education compulsory and free in Kolhapur state in 1917. He ensured that his orders were followed with diligence. Even today, we could not emulate Shahu. He reserved 50 per cent of the jobs in the state's administration for backward castes which included all castes other than Brahmin, Prabhu, Shenvi and Parsi. Like education, Shahu worked forcefully for weeding out the scourge of untouchability and caste discrimination. To do this, he promoted social awareness by actively helping institutions, organisations and individuals committed to spread of education. He encouraged the movements like Satyshodhak Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society. His aim was total revolution and he fully used all his energies and political power towards this end. Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde has described Shahu as the "natural ripple of Maharashtra's character". However, the word 'ripple' is not adequate. Rajarshi Shahu was a veritable storm.

Shahu passed revolutionary orders to empower *dalits* and give social justice to them so as to destroy untouchability. He abolished the system of agricultural bondage. He hammered at the caste

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system with a passion of an iconoclast and articulated the woes and sorrows of the downtrodden. In 1918, he abolished the *baluta watan* system of the Mahar caste. He provided for stringent punishment to those who exploited *dalits* and other unfortunate castes stigmatized as criminal castes. Indeed Shahu was the 'supreme court' and the'constitution' of the *dalits*. He appealed to the young leader like Ambedkar to lead the liberation struggle of the untouchables. Had Shahu lived a little longer, he could have substantially contributed to the struggle of the untouchables.

From 1916 onwards, Shahu had started expostulating his fundamental thinking on social issues. Conflicts build the character of man, experiences shape his thoughts and thinking enriches the content of his ideals. Shahu's work and ideals are a testimony to these words. The force of Shahu's arguments and thinking was so powerful that even the deaf could understand his message. Indian belief has it that extra-ordinary men have on their palms and feet the design of the hallowed *sudarshan chakra* sculpted by the nature itself. Shahu was such a superman. He was possessed with the ideal of building a casteless society. He never opposed the movement for political freedom but he did expose the short sighted activities of those who opposed social reforms in the name of freedom struggle. His contemporary radicals had lost sight of the fact that political freedom was meaningless without social freedom. That made his commitment to social reforms total. He passed a law in favour of widow remarriage in 1917, another for inter-caste marriages in 1918 and yet another providing for divorce. These laws together constitute the basic Hindu Code Bill which also upholds the individual freedom of women. By ushering in a welfare ambience, Rajarshi Shahu showed that he had the heart of the mother. As per Plato's concept, he was a true philosopher king.

Rajarshi's dream is unfulfilled today, trapped as it is in history's pages. Destiny beckons us to carry it forward.

The Westward Wind had strengthened poet Shelley's optimism. He says, "O wind, if winter comes can spring be far behind!"

Shahu's revolutionary character had similarly strengthened common people's optimism. But alas, " the spring is far behind, far behind!"

If we can draw inspiration from this beacon of a man, I believe we can overcome the unholy atmosphere of discrimination and fractionation to build a new society fit for our progeny. It is our duty to carry forward his work.

(From *'Haak aani Aakrosh'* with acknowledgements)

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10.

Shahu : An Action-oriented Satyashodhak

V. V. Shirwadkar alias Kusumagraj
Veteran Marathi Poet honorued with 'Gynapeeth' award

The Satyashodhak Movement pioneered by Mahatma Jotiba Phule was a revolutionary event in modern Maharashtra's history. It was the first comprehensive attempt at complete and fundamental reform of a society fraught with injustice and discrimination for centuries. He tried to remove all kinds of inhuman practices from social life such as caste discrimination and tonsuring Brahmin widows. He laid out extensive moral justification for his movement. The movement declined after Jotiba's death in 1890. Even during his life time the Satyashodhak agitation had not spread to all corners of Maharashtra.

Pune, dominated by the traditional orthodoxy then. was the cultural capital of Maharashtra. Lokahitawadi, who had taken a realistic but provocative stand (on reforms) had already published his famous *Shatapatre* (Hundred Essays). Justice M.G.Ranade had propagated change by taking recourse to spiritualism and religion. But all these conflicts were simply ideological. Phule's greatness is that he gave an action-oriented dimension to the ideology of change and brought the struggle to the practical ground level. Pune was the centre of this conflict. Jotiba Phule spent his life and all his moral courage to fight the battle. The movement, however, was confined to cities and did not involve common people away from the cities of Pune and Mumbai. After Jotiba's death, the movement and the ideology of change weakened.

It was Shahu's historic contribution to give a new life and strength to this movement. The Satyashodhak ideology and activities could reach most parts of Maharashtra mainly owing to Shahu's active leadership. It was during his time that the agitation truly became a movement. His understanding of social change was profound and commitment firm. Having learned English language from English teachers in a school for

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princes, his mastery of that language was remarkable. Prabodhankar (Thackeray) has related how versatile was his reading of English books on social philosophy, and how deep and versatile was his knowledge. It is quite likely that at least a part of his inspiration for his revolutionary work later came from his readings and scholarship may have helped organize his thinking. However, Shahu was not the man to get lost in an ideological fog, or wage verbal debates. He was courageous and action-oriented by character.

Shahu lived in the palace but was always surrounded by common people. There are legends about how he used to partake of coarse bajra bread and salt with poor peasants in their huts. The legends may be true or exaggerated. But there always is some iota of truth in legends. Shahu's legends only show that he was not a typical Indian Maharaja who would abandon himself to riots of luxury. As a people's true leader, he was one with the soil and knew the pulse of the people, understood the quality of the society and was fully aware of its expectations from him. He was fiercely against casteism and caste domination. But his life shows that he never hated a caste per say. He encouraged non-Brahmin wrestlers and also promoted the Kirloskar Natak Mandali, a theatre company fully consisting of only Brahmins. He supported Balgandharva (the legendary singer of Brahmin caste) like his guardian. There were contemporary scholarly princes in India who held progressive views and were popular among the people. But Shahu was unique so far as free and continuous interaction with the people was concerned.

His love for the people led him to the Satyashodhak movement and to eradication of social injustice perpetrated by traditions. After Jotiba, the leadership of the movement fell on him. The focus of the movement was the common peasant, the *Bahujan Samaj*, who large lived in abject poverty and stark ignorance in the dark world of villages. The only available means of communicating the movement's message to them was *tamasha*, or the folk theatre. Shahu promoted such *tamashas* and *jalasas* which spread out to thousands of villages. With such means Shahu created a new confidence, dynamism and awareness among the people who had lived in slavery for centuries.

It was only through education that the old mindset rooted in traditions could be changed so that people could be led into the new era of knowledge and science. Shahu undertook the task of spreading education with zeal, opening schools in villages, boarding houses in towns. To further his objectives Shahu used whatever instrument was available - newspapers, libraries, books, booklets, lecture series and so on. These comprehensive efforts made by Shahu took the Satyshodhak ideology to the remotest villages. That was a paradigm shift which witnessed in the immediate future a dramatic *"varnashram"* (class and caste) change in Maharashtra's social and political life. Later on, particularly after independence, issues of social equality got marginalized and new moral problems arose out of proximity to political power. Phule, Shahu and Amedkar laid the foundations of social change. The society is waiting for a new comprehensive social revolution based on that foundation.

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11.

Life and Contribution of Rajarshi Shahu

Justice P. B. Sawant
Former Supreme Court Judge

King as social revolutionary

The extreme harassment that Shahu Maharaja faced from his enemies within his state and without is a revealing illustration of the depth to which the petty, self-serving and evil powers in a society descend to mentally torment an individual. The kind of orthodox opposition Shahu's progressive programmes in administration, education, social and religious reforms encountered indicated how even the well-educated classes when their interests are threatened, bare their fangs like an angry cobra. The way Shahu had to face some weird incidents also show how a handful of mischief makers can visciously use filthiest of means to intrigue against and malign a ruler. Shahu's reign indeed has been a lesson on why a ruler, be it a king or a people's representative, must have in the administration people who favour his progressive policies and programmes if these are to be successfully executed. Shahu could overcome gigantic obstacles and successfully accomplish many of his objectives because of his supreme belief in the justness of his actions, his intense abhorance of injustice and his determination to get things done. A weaker person in his place could not have coped so ably to fight the hateful destructive social traitors as Shahu faced.

It is but rarely in history that a King is seen carrying the standard of social revolution. There have been many social reformer rajas and maharajas, but hardly can any king be considered as a social revolutionary. It is this unique and rare contribution of Shahu that will keep his memory alive for a long time.

Conflict with the priestdom

In India from ancient times the priestly class has dominated the ruling

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administration and all other social activities. The social hegemony created in the name of God and religion was at the root of the Brahmin power. The domain of knowledge was also monopolized by the same caste as others were denied the right to learn. The parameters created by this caste dominated everywhere including religion, social activities, moral principles, political affairs, law and judiciary, economics and commerce and literature and other arts. Without the Brahmin's approval not a leaf on a tree would move. Even the king had to supplicate as he needed their approval to gain sanctity to his regime. There has been competition for superiority all over the world between between the priests and the royalty. But the conflicts had remained confined between either to individuals or institutions. In Indian social milieu, there was no question of a competition as the Brahmin *purohit* always had a higher status, albeit nominal. The reign of the Brahmins was the only reality. The *purohit* made the king dance to his tune and the king had to be afraid of the Brahamin's knitted brow. That was the rule.

Undoubtedly, there were exceptions. Priesthood in India came under attack only after the English rule triggering spread of English education and Western philosophy. But their stubborn *varna* dominance remained steadfast. A Brahmin's contempt for the other 'low castes', had not changed a bit. The problems arising out of this exasperating attitude of the Brahmins inspired great souls like Phule to strive for a social revolution. Time brought this standard of social revolution on Shahu's shoulders. He used all the powers that a kinghood brought to further the cause of this revolution. The priestly castes and their supporters were determined to 'punish' Shahu for this 'crime'. Shahu's entire reign was spent in facing the conflicts emanating from this tendency.

Visionary and reformer

The Indian Constitution gives a place of pride to concepts such as liberty, equality, fraternity, removal of caste discrimination, eradication of untouchability, amelioration of the downtrodden for which Shahu struggled. For these goals, Shahu was obliged to cross swords with the leaders of the freedom movement and even with high caste leaders who were on the forefront of social reforms. This only shows how circumspect and narrow were their definitions of freedom, society, nation and people.

Shahu knew that freedom sans economic, educational and social equality meant continued hegemony of a handful and perpetual slavery of the majority. That India must be a free country was his stated position. At the same time, he insisted that the majority in India must be made capable to enjoy that freedom. He worked hard for overall development of the people in social, educational and economic field with this aim in mind. Like Phule he gave priority to spread of education because he understood education was the key to development. Education alone would not end their underdevelopment. Shahu launched a campaign to recruit them in administration to enhance their social and economic status. He had seen how dominance of one caste led to undesirable

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impact on administration. And so he reserved jobs for non-brahmins in administration, a principle which later was accepted by the Indian constitution.

Rare leadership

Shahu's work in Agriculture, cooperation and industry also underscores his progressive thought and statesmanship. Not for nothing is he described as the father of green revolution and pioneering promoter of the co-operative movement. His unique greatness is shown in his contribution to these areas just as in the reforms he introduced in administration; but more so in the fact that each contribution or reform he envisaged was aimed at uplifting the backward castes. The man's heart ached for the poor and this reflects in his each word, written and spoken, and his action. It is unusual to find a king who attended the gatherings of untouchables, workers and have-nots to guide them. Rare is the leader like him who regarded the injustices and woes of the downtrodden as his own and suffered physical and mental hardships to ameliorate their lot. Shahu did this when he had all the opportunities to wallow in the lap of luxuries.

It can be a subject of research as to from where and how he drew inspiration for his monumental contribution. Did he learnt of reality from the family where he was born, from the teachers who taught him, from the surroundings of his childhood or from the social ambience which seared his conscience? Or did these experiences only provide a fodder for his innate genius, practical wisdom and keen observation? A student shall be obliged to give equal weight to the circumstances in which he grew and to his native qualities, his keen empathy for the poor and his intense dislike for injustice.

Justice to history

Appreciative processes in this country are constrained by caste and religious sectarianism. It is difficult to come across an objective assessment of a person or an event. The history of this country is darkened by a polluted mindset. True history is yet to be written. Historians have denied justice to many great individuals and have interpreted events conveniently. But with the passing of time those ignored so far will find their place in history. Events will be interpreted in the light of reality. Shahu Maharaja has been one such individual victimized by caste blindness. His work received but rarely just acknowledgement from one or two biographers like Dhananjay Keer. It is hoped there will be many more Keers in history. Not only for giving justice to a great social leader like Shahu but also for giving justice to history. When this happens, the future of this country will be bright. The society riven by divisions of caste and religion will unite to create true brotherhood.The country then can truly stand united on this solid foundation.

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12.
People's King Who Made History

Dr. Nirmalkumar Phadkule
Critic and Writer

Many geniuses, creative minds and revolutionaries sacrificed their lives and used all their might to shape the character of Maharashtra. The meaning of word 'Maharashtra' implies greatness. Many have worked to raise Maharashtra to greatness. It is known as the country of the brave, *sadhus*, saints and social reformers. It has its distinct identity and glorious history. Chakradhar, Dnyaneshwar, Namdeo, Tukaram gave Maharashtra its religious understanding. Chhatrapati Shivaji lent it self-respect and freedom. Tanaji, Santaji, Dhanaji, Bajirao I infused it with bravery and diligence. Lokhitawadi, Phule, Agarkar, Shahu Maharaja, Sawarkar and Ambedkar gave Maharashtra its revolutionary thoughts.

The selfless *Swami*

Shahu Chhatrapati has an important place in Maharashtra's great revolutionary tradition. Shahu is acknowledged as a stormy and creative power in the social history of Maharashtra. This king used his power only for people's welfare. *"Raja mhanaje upbhogshoonya swami,"* says a character in Ram Ganesh Gadkari's play, 'Rajsanyas'. It means the king is joyless owner of his domain. It means a king is a *'sanyasi'* in order to look after his domain. Shahu's life and contribution is aptly revealed in this quotation. He never wallowed in personal luxury. Progress and happiness of the common man was his concern. He created a new history by empowering and educating the oppressed and the exploited. For him 'Rajdharma' was not just looking after the people. He held that the common man should be enabled to live a life without exploitation and that the people's traditional view of life should be changed for the better.

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Those in power try to keep the people materially happy and there ends their duty, they feel. Few rulers seem to have gone beyond this concept. Shahu, whose icon was Chhatrapati Shivaji, never considered ensuring people's material happiness as his only duty. Many of his contemporary princes and kings were rabid and irresponsible rulers who rolled in luxury. They were totally unaware of their duties other than selfish enjoyment of world's pleasures. These vassals without any dignity and self-respect only exploited their subjects and suppressed their expectations. Their attitude helped the English consolidate their power. On this background, the work of Shahu is undoubtedly truly revolutionary and constructive.

People's King

The word 'revolutionary', though carelessly used these days, can be aptly applied to Shahu. There is an important difference between social reformers and revolutionaries. An activist thinker who destroys the redundant thoughts, ideas and social habits and replaces them with rational values commensurate with modern times and fights for this ideal, can be described as a revolutionary. A revolutionary mindset abhors the beaten path. For him a fight with the traditional social mindset built over centuries is unavoidable. Shahu faced many such conflicts. One who only outwardly tries to please the people becomes popular. But a ruler like Shahu trying to mould the life and mind of the people often had to face controversies and unpopularity. He gave shape to new progressive ideas by fiercely attacking social inequality and ignorance. He drew inspiration from Mahatma Phule's powerful ideas. However,he was as single-minded in his approach as Sant Tukaram who says

Satya asatyashee man kele gwahi/ Maniyele naahee bahumata ।

(The mind has tested what is truth and what untruth. It rejected the majority opinion.)

In such a situation, *Ratrandin aamha yuddhaacha prasang* - We are obiged to fight day and night. Shahu personally went through this experience. A revolutionary has to traverse a thorny path and face massive obstacles. Fortunately, Shahu being a king, he could surmount these obstacles more easily than other revolutionaries. The common man had always remained the focus of his social and educational activities. That was how he was rightly hailed as the 'people's king'.

Glorious chapter of history

No revolutionary is entirely self-made. He is shaped by his time and the existing conditions.. The past and the past thinkers inevitably influence his mind. Shahu created a new society but he too derived inspiration from the past. It is not an accident that a great visionary and socially committed king was born in Maharashtra. It is this soil of Maharashtra which created this shining spark. Maharashtra had dreamt of a man of Shahu's caliber right from Chhatrapati Shivaji's time.

A critic says, "The work of art is a product of its environment and nothing else." The statement also applies to great men. However, it will be wrong to say that time and environment alone shaped Shahu. Some seeds have a burgeoning will to grow and develop. It fights

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adversary conditions to live and grow. A review of Shahu's life shows that his dynamic personality always surged forward to grow and change whenever necessary. His rebellion has a constructive content. Like any revolutionary,Shahu dreamt of creating a new society. Conditions were not very favourable. The British rulers did not approve of popular rulers of the states. Consequently, Shahu had to face many difficulties and negotiate his way with care while initiating his progressive movements. He stood firmly against the reactionaries and the British power to change the face of the society. Maharashtra's history will be incomplete without mentioning his contribution. Shahu's work is a glorious chapter of Maharashtra's history.

Unprecedented Contribution

The Indian society is fractionated in hundreds of fragments owing to the unscientific and birth-oriented hierarchy of inequality. The thousands of castes and sub-castes have been so divisive that the society hardly ever had a homogeneous character.An exceptional King like Shivaji could unite the castes and creeds to light the flame of freedom and self-respect in the society. After Shivaji, however, the ferver declined. The caste divisions hardened further. A human being's identity simply became his caste given to him by birth. Truly, there did not exist an entity called a Hindu or an Indian society. The ignorant, weakened and fatalistic society fragmented in numerous divisions easily fell into slavery. Indeed, the caste system has been a major challenge to the Indian social reformers. The castes, based on rabid discrimination were a powerful instrument in the hands of the vested interests. It was lent sanctity by the *smriti, shruti and puranas*. People believed this was their religion and lived in their narrow social segments. Buddha, Mahavir, Basaveshwar, Chakradhar attacked these walls but their efforts succeeded only marginally. Mahatma Jotiba Phule's fierce attack had considerably shaken these walls.

Shahu inspired by Phule, stormed the monstrous fort with all the forces he could muster. He himself had suffered the viciousness of the caste discrimination as he was labelled a 'shoodra' by the Brahmindom. Shahu's battle was two fold - one facet was to attack the caste system and the other was to rebuild a new society where no one is high or low and all are equal. This was a unique combination never before attempted. He stood for the untouchables who were denied the rights of human being. Shahu used to share meals with Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Dhor and other 'untouchables'. He afforded them social dignity and provided them opportunities to enter trade. His efforts to educate the *dalits* and give them jobs in his government have been unprecedented.He was criticized not only by Brahmins but also by *Bahujan Samaj* for departing from the 'holy traditional path'. Some respected newspapers raised a howl at him. That was expected. Because those who are blinded by orthodox tradition are apt to recoil at a new beam of light. Shahu once joked at the rantings of his opponents, "I am accustomed to two things - a good massage and mouthful of abuses from Brahminic newspapers".

Human being in every sense

Shahu was a great revolutionary after Phule who tried to remove the blot of untouchability on human civilization. He

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made the *dalits* aware of their rights and tried to remove their inferiority complex. The social reform movement gained strength with his efforts. Shahu once said, "The most abnoxious manifestation of casteism is seen in the way you *(dalits)* are treated by other castes. You are our brothers, and yet you are treated as if you are inferior to cats, dogs and pigs. The self-declared high caste people are angry with me because I am trying to improve the lot of the backward castes. A doctor cares more for a weak child to make it as strong as the others. The so-called untouchables should be attended to in this spirit. That does not mean that I hate Brahmins, remember." In the same speech,he said, "it is horrendous to describe any one as untouchable. You are not untouchables. You are more intelligent, more braver and have sacrificed more for this country of which you are a part than those who boycott you as untouchables. We are equal brothers. We all have equal rights."

Man, the main focus

The ideology that discriminates between man and man on the artificial basis of caste, ethinicity and cult and which keeps a large segement of the society out of bounds by labelling it as 'untouchable' is the most objectionable and unjust ideology. There is no logic neither human empathy in it. Shahu rejected this ideology to serve the humanity. Since all non-Brahmins were considered *'shoodras'*, the power of knowledge was monopolied by the Brahmins and the others were kept away. This sapped the mental and intellectual strength of the society. To Phule and Shahu goes the credit to lift the society from this miserable morass in recent times. The movement for liberation of the *dalits* has a broader dimension of the liberation of the human society as a whole. Social and religious systems rob the man of his freedom, suppress the natural urges of the man who is born free. The traditional authority of the *varna* and the caste systems have put the man in many shackles. With this broad perspective in mind, Shahu always kept man as the focus of all his policies and actions. The hurt vested interests accused Shahu of being a Brahmin hater just as Vishnushastri Chiplunkar accused Lokahitawadi (a Brahmin himself) as also Jotiba Pule in the same words. Much adversary propaganda was made in this respect to mislead the people. A consistent propaganda of this kind does make an impact. Even today, there are people who spread such canards about Phule and Shahu. That is because the two great men had exposed the hollowness of their claim to superiority.

There is no substance in the accusation that Shahu unjustly gave prestige to the Marathas and *dalits* by spreading hatred of Brahmins. As the king, he was morally obliged to treat all segments of the society as equals. The society loses its balance when one class is knowledgeable and prosperous and the other lives in misery and ignorance. Shahu had fully accepted the liberal principle that each man had the right to acquire knowledge or skill in any field. The impact of this ideology was clearly visible in his state and outside in Maharashtra. And although, Shahu's priority was upliftment of the *dalits*, as a cultured man, he had a keen eye and profound appreciation for the men of quality. He encouraged and shaped in his state poets, writers, singers, painters,

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thespians, wrestlers, hunters, skilled farmers and scholarly teachers to achieve greater heights in their respective fields. Indeed, he made the Kolhapur state the home of the arts and culture. The men and women he encouraged belonged ti different castes and creeds. As the admirers of humanity and quality, his sophisticated tastes never made him discriminate between artists and scholars on account of their birth. He equally drew pleasure from the classical music exposition be the artiste a Hindu, a Muslim or a so-called low caste. This cultured approach built the reputation of the Kolhapur state and that tradition continues even today. These facets of Shahu's character reveal the cultured and humanitarian bearing of the man.

Education, the only path

Shahu's view of life was healthy, clean, rugged and rather manly. The vigorous efforts he made to spread education not only in his state but all over Maharashtra are truly remarkable. His speech at the Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Shikshan Parishad at Khamgaon succinctly reveals his broad vision on education. He says, "Education is the only way out. History shows no country has progressed without education. An ignorant country can never produce statesmen or brave warriors. India needs compulsory and free education. In this respect, our past is like a dark night. Only one caste had monopolised knowledge. Manu and his followers had closed the doors of knowledge for the low castes. I am methodically following a program of educating people of different castes and I wish that will continue in my life. If we desire to break the shackles of casteism, it is necessary to forget stories of the past such as Ram was Kshatriya and Parashuram a Brahmin. If the present caste system continues, our freedom would mean rule of a handful of people."

Sowing Progressive Thoughts

These are the mature thoughts of a popular ruler, a passionate idealist, lover of education and believer in equality. At a time when most Native Rulers in India lived on the blood and sweat of their subjects, here lived a people's king who stood by the people and enriched the social life by his sacrifice, hard work and affection. He sowed the seeds of progressive thoughts in this land. He was trying to create a new man. Historians have not taken adequate cognizance of this glorious historic development. Often we find our historians, researchers, artists, poets and journalists wearing blindfolds of their prejudices. They cannot make an adequately objective assessment of the history. The fact is that Shahu awakened the self-respect of men living in misery and made them stand erect with dignity. Great men like Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil, Panjabrao Deshmukh, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, Bhausaheb Hire drew inspiration from Shahu and established numerous educational institutions in Maharashtra. Today Maharashtra owes its progressive credentials in educational and social developments to the monumental work done by Phule and Shahu. Mahar Watans were abolished in Maharashtra after the Independence. But Shahu did it long before freedom came. That was an unprecedented event in this country's social history. This is a matter of pride for Maharashtra. It is appropriate, then, to expect at least genuine appreciation of such developments.

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Uncompromising mission

A human being must not be deified. But there is nothing wrong in understanding and appreciating the enrgy and inspiration great men evoke. It is difficult to find such mature followers who would take the work of their leader ahead. It is important to avoid blatant deification and rank misunderstandings in respect of Shahu and follow the middle path of objective evaluation and mature understanding. To make a God of the leader is to shirk the responsibility of following his tenets. This has been the lot of great men of India like Chhatrapati Shivaji, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar. We need more students of history and more workers who would draw inspiration from history rather than blind deification of historic personalities. It is just to be proud of Shahu. But I would rather like Shahu to be a fountain of inspiration, a subject of close study and a leader worthy of emulation. Lord Rama in poet Bhavabhooti's play 'Uttara-Ramacharita' says,

Sneham dayam cha saukhyam cha yadi va jaanakimapi ।

Aradhanaaya lokaanam munchato nasti me vyatha ॥

(I am prepared to banish all pleasures of life, nay, even Sita for the happiness of the people. That would cause me no grief.) Chhatrapati Shahu too had gone through difficult times. Because of his popular movements, the English rulers were trying to dissolve his state. He was pressurised directly or indirectly to distance himself from these movements or face dissolution. Shahu faced these pressures calmly. At last he wrote to the Government:

"Why do you speak of removing me? If it comes to that, I shall resign myself. But till my death, never shall I abandon my goal of uplifting the Bahujan Samaj." Shahu's determination, sharpness and ideological commitment is evident in these words. He always stuck to his objectives of social reform and never flinched from pursuing his goals even at the risk of losing power. There is a legend that Shahu, a tall muscular and powerful man that he was, once lifted a cart bogged down in a muddy hole with his strong arms and put it on the road. The legend has another dimension. Shahu lifted on his mighty arms the cart of social life mired in the mud of ignorance, inequality and poverty and put it on a road to progress. Shahu belongs to only a handful of progressive and revolutionary rulers who changed the course of history with their own strength and commitment.

A place in people's heart

Indeed, this giant of a people's king unfurled the flag of the new era. The Kolhapur throne was a small thing for this great man. A king does not acquire greatness because he sits on a large throne. Those who ensconce themselves in the people's heart are the true people's kings. This king carried on his shoulders the standard of humanity. He hurt himself fighting for the poor, the oppressed and the *dalits*. History will tell us how far Shahu succeeded in his mission. We must remember, though, that a defeat in pursuit of higher human values is a glorious defeat. It is no small success that this people's leader took the progressive social movement to the remotest villages of Maharashtra.

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13.

Shahu Chhatrapati : Tradition and Modernity

Dr. Bhaskar Laxman Bhole
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Nearly seventy five years have passed since the dimise of Rajarshee Chhatrapati Shahu, but objective and unbiased assessment of his actions has yet to take place. During his lifetime he courted disfavour of upper caste people on several accounts. It was a natural repercussion of the bold decisions implemented by Shahu in religious, social and economic spheres of life. Those affected by his decisions, namely big shots within the state and his relatives outside the state, presented a distorted picture of his personality and the work undertaken by him; so much so that even today there are several rumours and misunderstandings surrounding him. His self proclaimed successors propagating casteist politics through Non-Brahmin movement and his upper caste chauvinist opponents, both have lopsided understanding of his personality. His supporters could never capture the essence of his greatness while his opponents never understood the significance of his deeds.

Shahu Chhatrapati always showed affiliation towards the Arya Samaj. He insisted upon *Vedokta,* founded a religious seat of Kshatrajagadguru, built hostels on caste basis, never gave up idol worship, fulfilled his ritualistic obligations, opened Pathshalas that trained priests from castes other than the Brahmins. Citing acts like these, his opponents have mistakenly branded him traditional, chauvinist, conservative, revivalist, *Varnashram* supporter , casteist and perpetrator of the clergy. The same mistake was repeated even by some of his supporters. The reasons for this can be found in the faulty understanding as mentioned above.

In reality Shahu Maharaja was neither regressive nor stagnated. None of his actions were ever contradictory to his beliefs in modern reforms. He was practical and pragmatic. But he never agreed to compromise his

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principles. He himself has conceded that being born in a noble family, being brought up in feudal surroundings and having shouldered the responsibility of the kingdom at tender age, inculcated traditional values in him; it also defined and limited the scope of his actions. That he outgrew them with the help of independant intellect and rationality, is something mentioned by him on several occasions. He was a Believer. But he thought of Religion in sociological and material terms. Initially, he may have been temped by the special status accorded to Kshatriyas under caste system, to support it, but in the later years of his life he emphatically stated the need to abolish *Chaturvarnya* and caste system. He also supported movements and institutions that fought against casteism. Looking back, one can see that even those of his decisions that appeared traditional had a very modern core.

Shahu Chhatrapati had an acute understanding of the inter-relationship between tradition and modernity, which was equal, probably only to that of Mahatma Gandhi. He had full faith in what he was doing, had complete understanding of human problems and faultless grasp of the dynamics of social reforms. He had acquired all this by reading books as well as by acutely observing people and events. That's why unlike other reformers, his thoughts were never onesided, elitist or bookish. As a king, he had to continue the tradition on one hand but on the other, he was also a great supporter of modernity within the state. What other reformers tried to achieve by appealing to the public conscience, the Chhatrapati put in practice by way of government decrees. This could be one of the reasons, why the Chhatrapati was targeted more frequently and for a longer time by the conservatives opposing reforms.

Researchers, apologetically stating that his radicalism was restricted by his being Chhatrapati, ought to keep in mind that these restrictions went only as far as fulfilling the family traditions and rituals. His being a king offered him an opportunity to create modern environment within the state and this fact far more outweighed the so called restrictions. This was a ruler who took every precaution to avoid abuse of power. Power is a means. It should be used as a tool to destroy traditional inequalities and to construct a new society based on equality. He never had any doubts on this issue.

Shahu Chhatrapati was aware, that if political power becomes a goal in itself, it starts protecting the vested interests of the establishment. He was one of the very few people of his times, let alone other princes and maharajas, to realize this. It can easily be said that none of the political leaders of Pre-Gandhian Congress even had such an acute understanding of changing times. He could sense the winds of change, but he did not desire that the 'Indian' identity be carried away by these winds. Shahu Chhatrapati was Agarkar's ideal reformer personified who reformed "without losing the Indianness".

It is mentioned above that Shahu was a Believer. He used to go to Panchaganga river for a holy bath and carry out some rites there with the help

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of a royal priest. In him, the princely state of Kolhapur had found a just and able king after several years of adversity. So Shahu had to fulfill a difficult task of carrying out his Royal duties while strengthening the movement of religious freedom. He never let his instincts of social reforms be swayed under the influence of religion. Shahu took a middle course that avoided the neutral a-religious stand taken by the Moderates as well as the strong national construct based on religion propogated by the radicals to recruit people in the freedom movement. This course which was adopted by Shahu was more effective in terms of actual reforms...

There was a clear change in Shahu's attitude, from Religion towards Modernity. He was inclined towards the spread of Vedic faith and *Vedokta* rituals. While fighting for the Vedokta rights, at least initially he did not aim at basing the Vedic faith on a greater social equality and making the *Vedokta* rights accessible to all Hindus. He never argued, at least at that time, that *shudras* and *ati-shudras* should also enjoy the *Vedokta* rights. Later when upper caste chauvinists took a contradictory position and when Satyashodhak movement assumed a lead role in solving the problem, the *Vedokta* turned into a movement for social equality; till then, to quote Dr. Y. D. Phadke, "it was aimed at regaining rights and priviledges of Kshatriyas, prescribed under the *Chaturvarnya* system and denied by the Brahmins".[1] This aim, earlier, limited to Kshatriyas, became all encompassing and spread over all the lower castes in later years of his life and he severely criticised *Chaturvarnya* and caste system. This could be termed as *"Satyashodhaki"* phase in his life.

Shahu Chhatrapati never quite fully adhered to the Satyashodhak discourse. It is a common knowledge that he himself openly denied being a Satyashodhak. Nonetheless, he helped several projects run by the Satyashodhak Samaj including the Pathshalas that trained priests from castes other than Brahmin. Satyashodhak movement also came in handy to defeat his opponents in arguments. Satyashodhak followers like Bhaskarrao Jadhav, never hid their opinion that things like *Vedokta* or appointing a Kshatrajagadguru were of little or no significance.

But looking back, one feels that in shaping and changing social opinion, the course adopted by Shahu was more effective than the rigid rationalism of Satyashodhak movement. He never refuted theoratically the boycott of Hinduism by Satyashodhak followers or the insistence of Arya Samaj on the Vedic supremacy but chose middle path that reflected in the actual reforms carried out by him. This entire episode in his life as if highlights the consistency, interdependence and dialectics of tradition and modernity. Whatever his personal views on *Vedokta* may be, when he realized that his opponents were creating a rift between Kshatriyas and Shudras or even dividing Shudras into "Good Shudras", and "Bad Shudras'' or propogating that demolishing caste structure is equal to "making the society amorphous", he came to the conclusion that the Brahmins are not only against Kshatriyas but also against social equality. Once he realized this, he chose more and

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more strong methods to solve the conflict once and for all.

During the British regime the Shankaracharya, who never ever had any social or political relevance earlier or who never offered any resistance to the Islamic invasion in order to protect Hinduism, started playing a role of religious head and settling disputes. In order to check his rise to religious power, Shahu appointed a Kshatrajagadguru. This was an attempt to redefine and demarcate the sphere of religion under changed circumstances. Shahu wanted to establish that the King had a right to appoint a religious head and that the King's authority is greater than that of a religious head. He wanted to check the growing importance of Shankaracharya and lift the bans on non-Brahmins, forbidding them to perform certain rituals.

But if one takes a look at the code of conduct prescribed for the Kshatrajagadguru, one can see that this appointment made by Shahu was based more on the modern, material aims rather than traditional religious faith. The Kshatrajagadguru was free to marry if he chose to do so. He could not take *padyapuja* (customary washing of feet) from anybody. It was expected that service to the nation and its people should be his aim in life. The post of Kshatrajagadguru was not hereditory and his successors had no claim on it. Hence to quote Dhananjay Keer, "it was an appointment of a religious administrator."[2] This Kshatrajagadguru was never ever considered an agent or a middleman between God and the devotee. Nor did he enjoy the great religious prestige accorded to the Pope or Shankaracharya.

Taking this into consideration, it can be easily said that Shahu was unduly criticised by his contemporary Satyashodhak supporters for appointing a Kshatrajagadguru, a mistake compounded even today by some of his detractors. He did not consolidate the position of religion doing this but proved that material power and rationalism are more important than tradition and superstition. His attitude towards religion became crystal clear during the last phase of his life. In 1920, while making a speech in the All India Depressed Class Mission, he stated unambiguously that an individual may have affinity to religion but it should not become an hindreance to issues of national importance.[3] He believed that the traditional mindset could be changed, if the rituals are fulfilled by trained priests, irrespective of their caste and creed and the hegemony of casteist Brahman priests is broken. With this aim he offered financial aid to the Satyashodhak Pathshalas training priests.

Shahu Chhatrapati was not an arm-chair thinker surrounded by books. He aimed at changing social reality rather than maintaining a formally rigid rational position. The social reality is a product of several thousand years of social history and not a construct of the present. It is shaped by changes brought in by several generations. It can neither be presented in a neat, logical, theoratical model, nor can its complexity be easily compartmentalized. The theoraticians of modernity can very easily separate the two concepts of religion and social reality, but those who are a part and parcel of that social reality cannot do so. Shahu wanted to improve the quality of life, to

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completely destroy superstitions in the society, to neutralize the forces that were responsible for leading the society to an artificial state and to mobilize the social life by conquering traditional mindset, laziness and inertia of centuries.[4] A miracle, whereby the beneficiaries of a Revolution are those who bring it in, was to be wrought. Special help was to be rendered to those weaker sections of the society whose life was full of misery, in order to bring them upto the same level as other sections of the society. That was why having a continuous dialogue with the Society was more important to him than preserving the theoratical purity.

In order to make people the architects of new society, Shahu had to live amongst them, share their passions and experiences. This was possible only by showing respect to people's faith and changing it for better and not by destroying or disregarding that faith. Religion and tradition wield a considerable influence over the social psyche and any step taken towards modernity is always viewed as a threat to religion. History is witness to the fact that people are so sensitive to religious issues that they defend them stoutly, at times even disregarding their own safety. Hence bringing about social changes and making people more receptive to Modernity is a great challenge indeed. Shahu Chhatrapati had to face this challenge. So he could neither divorce tradition like the moderates nor turn his back on modernity like the radicals. The greatness of Shahu Maharaja is illustrated by the fact that he reached several sections of the society and made them more receptive to modernity. He fulfilled an important task of enlarging the social scope of modernity, which was till then limited to the classes and took it to the masses.

One of the important aspects of his modern outlook is the work undertaken by Shahu in the field of education. Researchers have justly applauded him for changing education from a 'commodity of personal benefit' to a 'commodity of social benefit.'[5] He took special efforts to spread literacy among children, especially girls of poor, socially backward classes and untouchables. That those sections of the society which are almost like an invalid due to illiteracy should come up to the level of other sections, was almost an obsession with him. He considered education as an investment in the Human Resource Development area.

It could very well be said that Shahu sowed the seeds of socio-cuitural as well as agricultural and industrial revolution in Western Maharashtra by imparting new techniques in agriculture and industry through education. The education should be such that it should inculcate pride and not shame, towards one's hereditory trade. Shahu saw to it that every village school had a piece of land attached to it where the students would work and learn the dignity of Labour.[6] He believed that unless the students learn dignity of labour, they will not be able to take pride in their family trade and will turn away from their parents. Before providing education facility to the subjects of his state, Shahu had acutely observed the social reality.

This speaks of Shahu's highly pragmatic attitude. He had carefully gone over the number of students, girls and

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boys, belonging to various castes and classes, before proposing schemes to increase their numbers. These schemes included compulsory and free primary education, separate hostels for students belonging to different castes, special schools for girls and untouchable families. So much so that Kolhapur State came to be recognized as a City of Hostels all over India.

Opening seperate hostels for different castes, Shahu Chhatrapati strengthened the caste system, was a standard criticism levelled against him by his contemporaries. The echoes of the same criticism can be heard even today. But this allegation is baseless, as is shown by the following evidence. Initially Shahu opened a hostel for students from all castes and appointed Brahmin administrators to look after it. Ten years down the line when he found that only Brahmin students were enjoying the hostel facility, he cancelled it. He then contacted social workers belonging to different castes, helped and guided them to open caste based hostels.[7] History is witness to the fact, that he did it with a non-casteist point of view, as a necessary evil.

Shahu Chhatrapati confessed that at one point of time he was traditional and conservative and wanted the caste hierarchy to continue; but he also repeatedly stated that with experience his views on caste hierarchy underwent a complete change. He came to realize that caste hierarchy should come to an end. So long as caste hierarchy exists, caste conflicts will continue and these caste conflicts will hinder the development of the nation. He also thought that it is essential to treat all the backward classes as one caste, in order to end casteism completely. He declared that while undertaking the efforts to dissolve caste barriers, he did not want to start conflicts among various castes. People belonging to upper castes support caste hierarchy, as they have vested interests in it, as the caste hierarchy safeguards their social supremacy and prestige. For them it's a natural state of affairs that upholds social stability and development.

Shahu did not accept this. The caste system does not exist anywhere else in the world except India, hence it cannot be said to be 'a natural state of affairs'. He believed that opening hostels on caste basis would ultimately help the cause of dissolving caste barriers. According to Prof N.R. Phatak, opening hostels on caste basis was in synch with the *Vedanta* thoughts, that Shahu believed in. Self realization comes first, then and only then comes *Moksha*; this *Vedanta* principle was underlying this belief. Saint Poet Tukarama has also said that self realization ends all false discriminations. Shahu believed that education will bring about enlightenment among youth from various castes, it will help them find their identity and this in turn will cause divisions amongst castes to reduce gradually and ultimately a homogeneous, united society will come into existence.[8]

In 1920 while inaugurating a Maratha Boarding in Nasik, Shahu Chhatrapati expressed his satisfaction saying, that though the hostel was built with the help of donations from the Marathas, its doors were open to students from all the castes and that this fact reflected the nationalist and open outlook of its founders. He always said that there is no harm in

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forming caste based conferences but they should strive to bring about a casteless society. But soon he came to realize that his accepting the presidentship of such caste based conferences is strengthening casteism and hence he purposefully kept himself away from such caste conferences in later years of his life.

Shahu always supported every effort to abolish caste system because he implicitly believed that continued existence of several castes is a hindrance to collective progress of the society. So abolishing caste system is a precondition to the country's freedom. According to him intercaste marriages on a large scale was the most effective way of ending the caste system. The Act that nullified intercaste marriages and stripped the offsprings of such marriages of their inheritence rights was unjust according to Shahu. He publicly supported the Bill proposed by Vitthalbhai Patel in the Central Legislative Council, that accorded legitimacy to intercaste marriages. In 1917, Shahu had passed the Re-marriage Act, thereby removing the technical difficulties, hindering Hindu-Jain Intercaste Marriages within the Kolhapur State. He also played an important role in arranging intercaste marriages. The upper caste people should take a lead to abolish the caste system. He thought that abolition of caste system can be brought about if the upper castes give up their prime positions in the birth-based caste hierarchy.

Shahu's policy decisions about untouchables speak volumes about the efforts he took to abolish caste system and bring about social interaction. He abolished the rigid code established by tradition indicating the low status of untouchables, opened all the public places to them. Instead of the 'Balute' system, he transferred lands to untouchables under Ryotwari System. Instead of meeting out insult, he restored their rights as human beings, offered them the freedom to choose their vocation, which was denied to them by tradition, by helping them to set up trade and insutry. Set them free from the enslavement of Mahar Watan (compulsory and hereditory fulfillment of certain menial duties by Maharas), appointed some young untouchables as land revenue officers (*Talathi*), some as lawyer and government clerks. Also offered 50% reservation for them in government jobs. He appointed them as postmen. That the untouchables should rid themselves of inferiority complex, acquire social prestige and should be capable of fighting for their rights, was his dream. By offering them jobs in all walks of life, he expected a double benefit, viz. increase in the skills of the untouchables and social integration. He confered the right to use dress-swords on ceremonial occasions, a token of Kahatriyahood to the untouchables, which was denied to them by tradition. He also gave them the opportunity to offer hospitality to the guests during the Princess's wedding. He appointed them as coachmen, even on his personal horse carriage and also as mahouts, allowed them to become members of the Municipal Corporation. Those who infringed upon the human rights of this class were severely punished. He asked resignations of those who did not agree to this policy.

This was something which had never occured before in the country. Shahu

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Chhatrapati was the only head of princely state, who put the motto 'Patriotism is upliftment of Untouchables' into practice. One more example of how cleverly he used tradition to bring in Modernity is as follows: One of his Mahar stable hands could sing *bhajans*. He put him on the job of abolition of untouchability. He was freed from his usual duties but his salary continued. Thus, all his subsistence requirements were taken care of. He was given a place on a thoroughfare, that everybody would pass. This place served as a smoking joint. While passing the chillum (Pipe) from one person to another, the concept of untouchability was dealt with a severe blow. Many such clever plans were put into action by Shahu Chhatrapati.

But Shahu also knew the limits of such plans. He was convinced that in order to end casteism and untouchability, the princely state of Kolhapur should undergo rapid and wide spread industrialization. Trade and Commerce should grow, modern and faster modes of transport should be employed, agriculture should develop and the backward classes should get more chances to develop. He was impressed by the Industrial Revolution that he witnessed while travelling in England and he wanted to bring it to his state. But he had realized the importance of industrialization even before this. Soon after his accession to the throne, he had conducted a industrial survey within the Kolhapur State. At his behest a report was compiled on the position of industry in urban and rural area, agriculture, education, transport, small scale and large scale industries, cottage industry, agro-based industry and their current status. His observations during the foreign tour had given him a new perspective. He planned in such a way that local resources would be fully utilized, poor peasants and small scale manufacturers could grow, employment would increase and infrastructure facilities for rapid industrialization would be made available. He deemed the inheritences of landlords to be indivisible, thus forcing them to come out from a decadent lifestyle and to turn to industry. He helped manufacturers from various places. He saw to it that the industrialization within the Kolhapur State was not concentrated in one place and reached all the corners of the state. A special township called Shahupuri was created that offered concessions to traders. This resulted in a considerable growth of jaggery trade.

According to Chhatrapati Shahu, co-operative initiative coming from people was more important than the steps taken by the government. He did not want the overburdened government machinery to shoulder additional task of industrialization but at the same time he did not want industrialization to turn into a tool in the hands of millionaires and capitalists. In 1912 he passed the co-operative Act and gave an impetus to the co-operative Movement. Thanks to Shahu Chhatrapati, Kolhapur is a leader in co-operative movement in India, even today. The co-operative policy of Shahu aimed at removing stagnation in agriculture and solving the problem of rural poverty, at least partially. Several projects of today's Green Revolution were started by him. This speaks volumes

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about his vision.

Shahu Chhatrapati's socialist inclinations are reflected into his Labour policies. He felt that Labour Unions like those in England should be formed in India and they should fight for the worker's rights. He was convinced that, "Local capitalists, chiefly consist of people from Brahmin or Vaisya Castes. Unless they are kept in check, workers, progress is impossible."[9] When the Labour Party in England came to power, he was happy. Empowerment of workers that would eventually turn into gaining of political powers by them, was a dream that he cherished in those davs. He also supported the 'Loksangha (Unions of People) founded by labour leader C.K. Bole.

Shahu Chhatrapati always wholeheartedly supported organizations based on modern issues than any hereditory caste affiliation groups. He was grateful to the British regime for bringing about a renaissance in India, that gave rise to formation of such modern institutions and organizations. Groups, standing on the edifice of tradition can be proud of their heritage and past, but they should, under no circumstances lose sight of present and the future. While inaugurating Jain Boarding in Kolhapur, he not only praised the importance of organizations based on modernity but reminded the Jains of their rich ancient heritage.[10] He brought about changes in the government administration by allocating social status and position on the basis of merit rather than birth in a upper caste; thus putting into practice the principle of modernity. His insistence, that administration should not be too bureaucratic, it should not be dominated by the so-called upper castes,the administration should be sensitive to the public opinion and the sanctity of administration should be upheld at all costs, speaks of Shahu Chhatrapati's modern outlook.

Because he was aware of the interdependance and continuity between tradition and modernity, Shahu Chhatrapati was never derogatory towards tradition. On the contrary he recognised the latent dynamicism of tradition and aimed at making use of it in the cause of modernity. Though he supported Satyashodhak movement on political grounds and aided them financially, he staunchly denied being a Satyashodhak himself, because such blatant rejection of tradition as propogated by the Satyashodhaks would not be acceptable to people and hence such movements would not be able to grow in terms of popular support. The policy of 'Tit for Tat' begets burning hatred but the society on the whole is unable to take a step ahead towards attainment of its goals. He wanted to avoid this. Because he was able to distinguish between these two, he came to represent, to quote Justice Vaidya, "the whole Modern India. He went beyond being a representative of just Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisya, Sudras or Atisudras, but he became a unified voice of the whole of the nation, all its geographical units, all its castes, sects and religions and of all the people, big or small".[11]

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14.

Chhatrapati Shahu and Scientific Temper

Prof. Kamalakar Dikshit
Critic and Theoretician

Shahu reigned for twenty eight years. During this period he made several decisions of political, social, economic, educational, religious and personal nature, as also those pertaining to the family. In the present article I am going to define the frame of reference he relied upon while making these decisions and examine whether the same were based on scientific attitude.

Let's first see what is the nature of scientific attitude.

What is scientific temper?

The history of the world is divided into three epochs, namely Ancient, Medieval and Modern. There was a steady progress of mankind in the Ancient times. In the Modern era the process of development aquired great speed. But for almost a thousand years from 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D. in the Medieval period development of the world had come to a standstill. Analyzing the causes of the same does not come under the purview of this article.

The Modern era was a successor to the Middle Ages. The spread of Enlightenment to dispel the Medieval darkness began nearly 350 years ago. The intellectual and physical progress attained during this period is glaringly evident. All this could be brought about because of scientific temper that prevails even today.

The scientific temper mentioned above is mainly based on the methods of Logic introduced by Aristotle (384 B.C.- 322 B.C) and Francis Bacon (1561 A.D -1628 A.D). Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, founded the Deductive method in Logic while the British thinker Francis Bacon revealed Inductive Logic to the world.

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The Deductive Logic expounded by Aristotle was useful while classifying the surounding world and what was already known. Deductive Logic can be used to acertain whether a general principle is applicable to a particular instance. But Deductive Logic of Aristotle cannot help man in aquiring new knowledge. This shortcoming persisted nearly two thousand years before Francis Bacon could come out with Inductive Logic in the 16th century and facilitate several new discoveries.

There are four stages to the Baconian Logic, viz: Observation, Hypothesis, Verification and Theoratization. When faced with a problem one has to observe the situation. Observation yeilds probable causes of the problem, which in turn help formulate hypothesis. The hypothesis has to be verified. If the veracity of the hypothesis is proved during experiments, it becomes a theory. But if the veracity of the hypothesis cannot be proved then it has to be modified or reformulated; the veracity of the same has to be proved again. This process goes on till the hypothesis is proved on the basis of experiments. Sometimes the process goes on for several years. Charles Darwin had to carry out research nearly forty years before he could expound the Theory of Evolution!

Many fundamental discoveries made in the last two centuries in the field of physics, chemistry, medicine, psychology, biology, botany etc. can be ascribed to this Scientific Attitude. But it also must be noted here that such break throughs are not made in the field of social and behavioural sciences.

Great research both in qualitative as well as quantitative terms has taken place in physics. Physics aimed at understanding the nature of the physical world. With this aim research was carried out; it is still being carried out on micro and macro levels.This research resulted into fruitful discoveries made by scientists like Tyco Brahi, Capller, Gallileo, Newton, Einstein etc.

Scientific Attitude facilitated remarkable progress in physics. Three important attributes of this Scientific Attitude as defined in the 18th century were as follows:

1. Statements about the surrounding world should be based upon observation
2. The material world is dynamic and everchanging. The changes that occur in the material world follow the Laws of Nature
3. The earth is not a centre of the universe and man is not a purpose of the universe.

The Scientific Attitude based on these three axioms is also called as "Mechanistic - Scientific Attitude".

Because of this Attitude and its spread in the eighteenth century, the quality of human life improved considerably. Trains, ships, cars, aeroplanes, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, computers, synthetic fibres, medicines, operations etc. made human life easier. At the same time human life came into grave danger because of ammunition, missiles, atom bomb, biological weapons etc. Man today enjoys all these things and people making use of all these things are termed as "Modern".

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But it is possible that a person or society enjoys all the benefits of modern technology and still does not have Scientific Attitude. A superstitious person may travel by air, use telephone, work with a computer. All this does not necessarily make him rational. The society in the Gulf countries, for example, is modern in this sense, but does not have Scientific Attitude. In short Scientific Attitude is related to the mindset of the people and not their standard of living.

Because of the Scientific Attitude mentioned here, considerable changes were brought about in the mindset of educated people in the last couple of centuries. As observation gained precedence, all the knowledge in all the religious treatises became doubtful. Several matters of faith now came to be regarded as superstitions. During the Middle Ages, superstitions played an important role in defining the social mindset. Several matters of faith, having no rational base, like witchcraft, magic, good or bad omens, hierarchical social order, discriminations on the basis of caste, colour and creed pervaded the society.Even Aristotle and Francis Bacon, founders of Logic were not free from superstitions. Aristotle thought that women have less number of teeth than men, while Francis Bacon tended to believe into sorcery.

The 18th century axiom, which states that the material world is dynamic and it moves according to the Laws of Nature raised doubts about the existence of God. The knowledge that the earth is not the centre of the universe and man is not the purpose of its existence, made man more humble. Also as the existence of heaven and hell became doubtful, Materialism became extremely important.

Actions of Shahu based on Scientific Attitude

It is interesting to examine to what extent Shahu's personality was influenced by Scientific Attitude. While analyzing anybody's personality, it is possible to examine thoughts, actions and speech of that person. But actions appear to be more reliable than the remaining two factors and hence Shahu's actions are deemed relevant for the analysis.

Shahu's parents expired before he turned twelve years of age. Shahu's father had remarried. Naturally Shahu had suffered at the hands of a step-mother. His father was an alchoholic. Alchohol affected his health. Shahu subtly expressed his displeasure at father's getting remarried while the children were very young and for indulging in alchohol. Despite being a king, Shahu never took a second wife, nor did he touch alchohol. Generally, a child learns to accept traditions through parents. Parents are the first source of traditional knowledge. It is not surprising, given this background, that Shahu became sceptical about the traditional values. In short, learning from his mother's death and father's unacceptable behaviour he must have decided not to follow the traditions blindly. Such a mind set facilitates the development of Scientific Attitude.

Shahu was educated in Rajkot and Dharwad. During this period of eight years, Shahu was put under the tutelage from learned Europeans like Principal McNoctun, Mr. C.S.Candy, Mr. Stuart Mitford Fraser etc. Mr. Fraser was an ICS,

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who was appointed as Shahu's Tutor-Guardian. Scientific Attitude was very much a part of the educated European mind set.It was but natural that Shahu inherit and assimilate it from his mentor Mr. Fraser and the course he had designed for Shahu's education. This occurred in the formative years of Shahu's life, between 11 and 18 years. It is not surprising then that it became a permanent feature of Shahu's mental make-up.

The eight years curriculum included subjects like Science, Law, History, Economics and Political Science. Along with this theoretical part Mr. Fraser had also organized three study tours; two in the Northern India and one in the South and Sri Lanka.These study tours offered Shahu an excellent opportunity to observe his native country and check the veracity of various things he had heard about it before.

Shahu had European tutors in both the places, Rajkot as well as Dharwad. It is true that he developed Scientific Attitude in their vicinity but it was also possible that he might have developed a liking for Western lifestyle. He might have developed an anglicised, condescending attitude towards his native country and its people. He could have been biased. Scientific Attitude is not compatible with bias or prejudice. A Maharashtrian, Mr. Krishnaji Bhikaji Gokhale always accompanied Shahu in Rajkot and Dharwad. Gokhale must have checked any undue Western influence on Shahu. After Gokhale retired, another Maharashtrian, Raghunath Vyankaji Sabnis took over, who remained close to Shahu till the very end. Thus, Shahu developed a balanced outlook because of the Indian cultural inputs from Gokhale- Sabnis on the one hand and Western education given by McNoctun and Fraser on the other. This probably helped him in developing an unbiased attitude. Also Shahu was not an egoist. Egoism is contrary to Scientific Attitude. Openness of mind, flexibility of convictions and sharp intelligence are required to carry out the scientific process including observation, hypothesis, experiments to prove its veracity and based on the results accepting or rejecting a hypothesis. While studying Shahu's life one can see that he had all the above mentioned mental attributes.

It would be interesting to examine some important events in Shahu's career on the basis of Scientific Attitude.

It was an ancient practice of the Indian kings to hand over the day-to-day running of the state to the Prime Minister and spend time on life's pleasures. Shahu did not follow it. Before his accession to the throne and even after it, Shahu toured extensively in India and abroad observing the actual circumstances and situations. Naturally, his decisions were based on these observations. Observation is a first step towards Scientific Attitude.

When Shahu took over as a king, the Karveer (Kolhapur) Municipal Council was in the hands of state appointed members. These members were not directly answerable to anybody. They would even send their representatives to the Council meetings. Shahu dissolved the Municipal Council and appointed Mr. Bhaskarrao Jadhav as an Administrator. In the sixteen years between 1904 and 1920 several new administrative techniques were implemented, thus

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laying the foundation of Civil Administration of modern Kolhapur. Elections were conducted in 1920 and the Municipal Council went back into the hands of elected representatives. Shahu's aim was social good, hence he did not see anything wrong in appointing Adminstrator and when his role was played out, elected representatives took over. This policy was definitely scientific.

The first budget that came to Shahu for approval was a deficit budget. He did not approve it. He passed the budget only when the deficit was removed and a surplus budget presented. Thus, the foundation of the princely state of Kolhapur was laid on the basis of Laws of Economics.

Later the state had to face calamities like drought and plague. While facing these calamities Shahu took several unusual and novel decisions which bespoke of his Scientific Attitude. During the drought, he saved lives of the entire population including invalids, the old and children, even the cattle. Not a single death occurred due to starvation. The number of people dying in the plague epidemic was negligible. He set up two special cells to carry out systematic relief work. All the measures taken to control the plague epidemic were based on modern Medicine.

Shahu got married at the age of eighteen. His wife Laxmibai was only eleven and half at that time. Shahu was advised by Lee Warner, Wodehouse and Fraser to postpone the consummation of marriage from the point of view of the reproductive health. Shahu acted upon the advice and postponed the consummation of marriage by three years.

Shahu realized that cultivation of tea and coffee is possible on the slopes of Panhala. Because of irregular rainfall tea or coffee cultivation involved certain risk. But Shahu was ready to experiment. The Forest Department carried out tea and coffee plantations at the behest of Shahu. Similar experiments were carried out on the Bhudargarh slopes. An unit manufacturing gum resins was also started. One must note that though the experiment of tea and coffee cultivation failed, the urge to experiment was veiy much scientific in nature.

Shahu had set up a paddock for animal breeding at Sontali camp. He bred some excellent species there, especially of horses and dogs. He had developed some new strains of mules by cross breeding horse and donkey. He experimented with breeding birds. A Russian zoologist Pavlov, in those days had successfully carried out experiments on conditioned reflexes. Pavlov received Nobel prize for them. Experiments on conditioned reflexes were carried out successfully on horses by Shahu. This paddock at Sontali was almost a "Bio-technological laboratory".

Shahu carried out experiments not only on animals but also on human beings. The experiments carried out on animals were of bio-technological nature; whereas those carried out on human beings were of "Socio-technological" nature. The Phaseparadhis were a nomadic tribe, purported to be having criminal tendencies and aggressive instincts. Even before the Marxist thought claiming that though certain traits in

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human nature owe their existance to genetics, the rest come into being depending upon the surrounding circumstances; if the circumstances are to change, the traits are also bound to change. Shahu had tried providing settled lifestyle to the Phaseparadhis. They were provided accomodation at the Sontali camp. Educational facilities for their children were also provided. The same kind of settled lifestyle was offered to the Dombari and Makadwale tribes. They were given houses and employment in the cities.

Shahu's innovative spirit in the sociological realms sufficiently highlights his Scientific Attitude.

Shahu's daughter-in-law, Indumati was widowed at the age of eleven and half. Shahu decided to educate her. This revolutionary decision received a stiff opposition from the Zenana, which eventually turned into a matter of family strife. The zenana boycotted an audience of the King. Shahu refused to give in and arranged for Indumati's education at the Sontali camp. After completing formal and informal training Indumati passed matriculation at the age of eighteen. Shahu wanted her to pursue higher education in Medicine at the Delhi Medical College. So he took her to Delhi and introduced her to the Principal of the Delhi Medical College. This is one more proof of his Scientific Attitude that he was ready to pay a high price while abolishing obsolete traditions and bringing in new reforms.

Shahu decided to construct a dam at Radhanagari. He asked the Public Works Department to carry out a survey, consulted several renowned engineers like Sir Vishweshwarayya. The construction of the dam went on for eight years. It ran into many difficulties. He spent millions of rupees from state coffers on the construction but it could not be completed due to the outbreak of World War. It was later completed by Chhatrapati Rajaram. This dam changed the face of Kolhapur. One can even say that the beginning of Green Revolution in Maharashtra can be traced back to Shahu. Steps taken by Shahu in the field of education and agriculture were in tune with the modern era.

The non- Brahmin class was lacking in education. Shahu wanted to remedy this. He opened a hostel for Brahmin and non-Brahmin students. After some time the non-Brahmin students left one by one. The experiment of common hostel was a failure. Shahu continued running the hostel for some years and then closed it down. He carried out another experiment by providing accomodation, lodging and boarding facilities in the palace to some promising Maratha students and also arranging a transport for them to commute to the school. The hypothesis was, once all the obstacles were removed, the students will concentrate on studies. This experiment was carried out to verify the hypothesis. The students enjoyed the facilities but did not study. This experiment also failed. Shahu did not pursue it. In order to discard the hypothesis that cannot be proved scientifically, one has to have a complete faith in the scientific process. As one can see from the above mentioned examples, Shahu had unwavering faith in the scientific process.

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On the basis of conclusions derived from these two failed experiments, Shahu carried out a third experiment in the field of education. The first experiment told him, that it is unnatural to expect a cart horse to compete with a race horse, while the second experiment proved that students become lazy when provided with luxuries. Accepting the reality of caste discrimination in the society, he carried out the third experiment where he encouraged opening of hostels providing basic amenities and operating on caste basis. Under Shahu's encouragement twenty two caste based hostels were opened in twenty years. These hostels were granted permanent sources of income. They provided free lodging and boarding to the students. This was a unique facility in whole of India. It was an absolute success. A great number of students benefitted from these hostels and many of them are now occupying prestigous positions in various fields.

Shahu experimented with having watani teachers. A watani teacher was granted a piece of land in lieu of the emoluments. He gave it up after three years as it proved to be unsuccessful. Training schools for Patils (village chiefs) and Satyashodhak schools for training (non-Brahmin) priests were organized by Shahu. Training schools for village chiefs ran for seven years, while Satyashodhak schools remained operating for a longer period. These experiments of Shahu speak of his Scientific Attitude in the social field.

In the nineteenth century Mahatashtra, there was a serious disagreement as to which reforms should come first, social reforms or political reforms. That reforms were needed was accepted by everybody. But there was debate as to which ones should get priority. Lokamanya Tilak advocated precedence of political reforms while Shahu was more in favour of the social reforms. This resulted in a disagreement between the two. They both remained true and unbending in their positions. The question is whose position was more correct? Even sixty years after the Independence, the progress of social reforms is dismal. But at the same time one has to note that whatever social reforms have occurred, could take place only due to political freedom. So one has to say that both Shahu's and Tilak's positions were correct.

The *Vedokta* episode was an important chapter not only in the life of Shahu but also in the social life of Maharashtra. It started in 1899 and ended in 1920 with the appointment of a Kshatrajagadguru. This ongoing affair of nearly twenty years caused a great upheavel in the religious as well as social life in Maharashtra. Though it could not end caste discriminations entirely, it certainly succeeded in dealing a severe blow to the social sanctity caste system enjoyed.

In the middle ages,the Roman Catholic Church had deviated from its original purpose. The Pope had started considering himself the highest authority. The Pope considered the religious power to be above the political power. Anybody challenging the Bible was a heretic and was severely punished by Inquisition. Gallileo was incarcerated for seven years because he proposed that the Earth rotates around the Sun. Philosopher Bruno was burnt at stake. Columbus was

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stoned and was considered a madman because he believed that the Earth is round. In such reactionary times a German priest Martin Luther protested against the Pope and founded the Protestant sect, bringing about several religious reforms that were more humane.

The Vedokta episode in Shahu's life was almost like Martin Luther's reforms. Shahu fought against the reactionary tendencies that distorted religion and perpetuated injustice. Like Martin Luther, he created a new seat of Kshatrajagadguru. Shahu was a social reformer as well as religious reformer. This is an important facet of his character. The same analytical abilities aroused by the Scientific Attitude motivated both , Shahu and Martin Luther.

While discussing anybody's scientific inclinations, however, one has to consider his point of view on the existence of God. If God is considered to be a physical entity, rules of Physics become applicable to it. The existence of God cannot be proved by Physics. Hence a Believer cannot be termed as scientific. But at the same time Physics has not conclusively proved that God does not exist. Hence a non -Believer cannot also be termed as scientific. Nor can one say that the former is more scientific than the latter or vice-versa. In this situation a question might arise as to what position should a scientific person adopt. A physicist's answer to the question of the existence of God is "We don't know". This answer has given rise to Agnosticism. No positive or negative statement can be made about the existence of God, so a scientific person should adopt agnostic or sceptic position. Most of the scientific people, like Pt. Nehru, Bertrand Russel, Einstein have adopted this position.

One can approach the problem of existence of God from the point of view of psychology as well. In this approach God is considered to be a concept instead of a physical entity. At some point of the evolution of human civilization, Man accepted the concept of God for its convinience. It is in this sense that poet Keshavsut wrote , "God and Demon are but creations of Man". By assuming the existence of God, it is possible to find explanations to some problems in human life. Life becomes easier. One can do without this assumption but then it becomes difficult to explain some problems in human life. The Euclidean geometry does not begin unless certain assumptions are made. The entire structure of Euclidean geometry is based on these assumptions. Because people find this structure useful, they accept the assumptions. The same can be said about the existence of God. There is no question of calling a person unscientific because he accepts the assumption of existence of God from such utilitarean point of view.

Several such concepts are accepted because they are useful to human life. Concepts like democracy, socializm, secularizm, equality, fraternity, freedom etc. are basic values of human life. None of these can be proved scientifically. Values are beyond the scope of science. God is also a value. People accepting God in this sense cannot be termed as unscientific.

Majority of people of the world accept God either as a physical entity or

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a concept. The Number of people not accepting God in any of the above two senses is negligible. A king or a prime minister, a leader of majority , who are Believers, cannot be a non-Believer. With the exception of Pt. Nehru, who was an agnostic, India never had a non-Believer leader. All the Indian leaders were and are Believers , who visit temples. People find the leftist economic thought attractive but they cannot digest the leftist non-Believer spiritual outlook. Hence it is difficult for left parties in India to come to power.

If examined on this background , one finds that Shahu's attitude about God was scientific. One cannot just equate natural sciences with the term Science, one has to include social sciences in it. It was logical that Shahu would accept religion and the Vedas on the same grounds as God. At the time of composition of Vedas, the nature of religion was broader. It became narrow and dogmatic during the puranic times in the middle ages. Social inequality rose and caste discriminations became more acute in this period. Shahu rejected *Puranokta* but accepted *Vedokta*. This was a correct position to adopt from sociological point of view.

Shahu had accepted certain concepts that came from the West, but he did not blindly follow everything coming from the West. Also he had rejected some, not all Indian traditions.He accepted things from both the sides, that could prove beneficial in the prevailing set of circumstances. He rejected caste discriminations but accepted sixteen sanskar rites from the Indian culture. He accepted modernity from the Western culture but did not take up day-to-day lifestyle. This would not have been possible if he did not have Scientific Attitude.

All actions or decisions by Shahu are not analyzed in the present article; except only those that underline his Scientific Attitude. But the conclusions will not change, even if another set of actions is analyzed, because even if the actions differ, the mindset will be the same.

To sum up one can say that the experiences Shahu had in his childhood, the upbringing he had at the hands of Western and Indian teachers and guides, helped and encouraged the development of Scientific Attitude. Naturally the decisions taken by him during his regime were based on Scientific Attitude.No other Prince in India can even come close to Shahu in this respect.

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15.

Shahu's Social and Political Strategies

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Rajarshi Shahu played an important role in moulding modern Maharashtra. He recognised the democratic undertones of the self-improvement movement launched by the backward class farmers in the first decade of the 20th century. Colonial influences coloured the politics of the period. The various policies of the British government resulted in different political situations across the country. The British government outlined political boundaries, giving people only limited rights and allowing them a very small amount of political power. The idea was to slow down the growing tide of nationalism. Various political groups were given permission to compete for the limited political posts available. This was done to enable the newly educated class to have access to power and to prevent the people from understanding the real nature of colonial exploitation. It also allowed the government to retain its hold on society. The government was scared that if the prevailing discontent grew out of hand, they would be faced with armed confrontation. These policies also affected the Indian feudal and caste systems.

Due to the prevailing caste system, early development measures benefited only the upper class Brahmins. Political awareness among them grew and they launched the freedom movement. This political awareness developed among the backward classes only later when they realised that the radical Brahmin leaders were not ready to share political power. Differences arose between the backward classes, who also hoped for democratic rights, and the indifferent attitude of the Congress leadership. Mahatma Jotirao Phule was of the opinion that if an institution with Indian representation was to be established, everyone

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should get a share of power, and for this all sections of the community should be more progressive. They should accept British sovereignty and oppose anyone who came in the way of progress of the community. Along with his followers, Phule therefore supported the British government, significantly opposing the Congress movement.[1]

1

When Shahu entered the social and political arena, Radicals were gaining a hold in the Congress. The national movement was becoming more popular. In Maharashtra, members of the educated Brahmin class became Congress leaders while the well to do zamindars and contractors were on the side of the government. In order to contain the Swadeshi fervour, the British government had begun to suppress the Radicals. They denied democratic rights to the Radical backward classes to gain the support of the educated Brahmin class. On *Vedokta* issue, Tilak supported the narrow minded, myopic Brahmins and Prof. Annasaheb Vijapurkar praised the caste system. It became impossible for the backward classes to support men like Tilak, Vijapurkar and Rajwade who upheld the caste system. Between 1885 and 1920, aspirations of backward classes grew, as did the influence and spread of the national movement. We shall have to study Shahu's strategies in the context of these two movements and the cunning policies of the British government towards these movements and how these provided him with time and space to establish himself.

After the *Vedokta* episode, Shahu was undecided about whose side he should take. He resolved to devote his life to the upliftment of the Dalits, the exploited and the backward classes. Most social organisations and backward class movements then were founded on following five principles which Shahu tried to put into practice:

1. To bring about comprehensive religious reform by giving it the foundation of public morality and by ending the dominance of the priesthood.

2. To spread education and insist on free and compulsory primary education.

3. To promote caste-wise organisations of the bakwards; awaken democratic ambitions of the Kshatriya by infusing the Kshatriya spirit in them and to increase their self-respect.

4. To reduce upper classes domination in social and political fields by establishing independent reserved electorates and reserved seats.

5. To promote, with the help of the British government, the establishment of parties for the backward classes and non-Brahmins for social upliftment and improvement in agriculture.

In the first two or three decades of the 20th century, movements like these had begun in the south and north India. Shahu encouraged these movements. Shahu was a liberal and tolerant man with a broad perspective. He was a smart strategist too. The British kept an eye him lest this descendant of Shivaji is not involved in the freedom movement. Earlier too the British had kept a close watch on Shahu's predecessors and created trouble for them. Aware of this,

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Shahu was extremely cautious in his dealings with the British.[2]

2

The Vedokta controversy spurred Shahu to speed up the religious reform. He praised the great work done by Swami Dayanand, Keshavchandra and Jotirao Phule and asserted that organisations like the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Satyashodhak Samaj were liberating society from religious slavery. Knowing that the aim of social reform was to raise the standard of public morality, Shahu opposed exploitation in the name of religion. Meanwhile, Swami Dayanand and Jotirao Phule had begun to propagate new ideas. Phule attacked religious hegemony of the Brahmins and exposed their religious position as their weak point. His Satyashodhak Samaj believed that there should be no middleman between God and the devotee. He said all men had a right to the Vedas; all mankind was equal. According to Swami Dayanand, a religion that exploited people should not exist in society. Shahu claimed that giving alms to Brahmins was a selfish way of practising religion, and only the elimination of this practice would save the country.[3]

Religious reforms are necessary to establish a new social order. Shahu encouraged the Satyashodhak Samaj with realisation that the Brahmin hegemony had to be demolished. Equality and fraternity were the two Satyashodhak principles that appealed to him. On January 11, 1911, the Satyashodhak Samaj was established in Kolhapur with Shahu's encouragement.[4] Later when complaints were made about Satyashodhak *jalsas*, Shahu said, "We have nothing to do with *jalsas*; however the principles which they teachshould be spread everywhere."[5] Shahu was also attracted to Theosophy. His religious curiosity was remarkable. On a visit to Madras he had discussions on religion with Dr. Beasant and George Arundale but didn't seem very impressed by their ideas.[6]

Shahu accepted social philosophy of the Satyashodhak Samaj. He felt that freedom from religious slavery was possible if one accepted Phule's path. A few years later however, the Arya Samaj began educating the backward castes in North India in the Vedas. At the behest of Maharaja Pratapsinh, he became a promoter of the Arya Samaj. At the same time, Swami Dayanand also supported all kinds of social reforms. This caused Maharaja to declare, "Although organisations like Satyashodhak Samaj may have made some reforms, they will not be very successful because they do it with 'an eye for an eye' attitude. The panacea to awaken the country is through the Vedic religion."[7] Shahu believed that the Arya Samaj had faith in the Vedas and did not break off all ties with tradition. Thus, caste hatred will decrease with Vedic religion facilitating growth of knowledge and progress.[8] He thought caste differences could be destroyed with the help of the Arya Samaj. He asserted that while the Satyashodhaks had the right not to believe in God and not indulge in idol worship, they had no right to force their views on others.[9]

In the process of initiating religious reforms, Shahu exposed the person then occupying the Shankaracharya's seat as

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caught up in the trap of power, wealth, false pride in his caste and egoistic politics. To attack Brahmin hegemony in religion, he established the Kshatrajagatguru, a measure opposed by many of his colleagues as they felt it continued the institution of religious middleman. Dhananjay Keer opines that Shahu wanted to make the Jagadguru an administrator in the religious field and not a representative of God.[10] With this step, Shahu wanted to challenge and destroy the Brahmin supremacy bestowed on them by accident of birth. He did not use the Jagadguru for issuing edicts on religious or social affairs. If he were to do that and obtain religious sanction for social reforms, it would have been an epoch-making event in history.

Shahu carefully selected only those common points from each of religious reform movements which appealed to his conscience. He held that religious scriptures were written by man and that idol worship was inappropriate. He wanted no middleman between God and man. Caste and colour discrimination was wrong. Man's greatness, he said, was dependent on his actions and one should trust a person who does good deeds. He felt that all religions show you the way to God; therefore none is greater than the others.[11]

3

Shahu promoted free and compulsory primary education believing that lack of education was the main cause of mass poverty. Education would also throw up a new educated class among the backwards. This class would be actively involved in social and political reform and help break the Brahmin grip on the society. He opened several hostels with the aim of breaking the caste system.

During this period the backward classes began to unite in an attempt to help their communities to progress. Shahu promoted this caste-wise unity, realising that it was the only way to bring people together to undertake any kind of social reform.[12] He established separate caste-wise boarding houses asserting that it was his moral duty to do so. This was the only way the backward classes could be freed from slavery and shown the path to progress. For him espousing backward castes's cause was not encouraging caste hatred.[13] He suggested caste conferences be held to destroy caste differences and not to strengthen these differences. People should show openness of mind and hostels for one caste should slowly be opened to others. This would help propagate the cosmopolitan spirit of brotherhood.[14]

The backward castes demanded that they be included in the Kshatriya community to raise their status in Hindu fold. This was the main issue in the Vedokta episode. Brahmins had claimed that in the era of Kaliyug, elision of *Sanskars* had rendered all castes other than Brahmins as Shudras. He insisted that if this was the case then the farmers were not Shudras but Kshatriyas and had the right to study the Vedas. He declared that during the Vedic period the Chakravarti kings and ministers used to farm, indicating that all farmers were Kshatriyas.[15]

Castes like the Nadars, Kurmis, Yadavs, Jats, Ezavhas and Reddys

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considered themselves Kshatriyas. This demand for Kshatriya status was not a process of Sanskritisation but a question of their dignity and self-respect. Prof. Rao feels that demand for Kshatriyahood, wearing sacred threads, or performing shravani rituals held in themselves not much significance for the Kshatriyas, but this was done to challenge and denounce the Brahmindom.[16] Besides, these activities gave them strength to launch several social and political movements. Shahu had reminded his people several times that caste conferences and demand for Kshatriyahood should not make them lose sight of the ultimate goal of eliminating caste differences.

Shahu wholeheartedly supported backward caste movements, helping with money and his position in the society. He moved all over the country to propagate this cause, addressed an assembly of Kurmi Kshatriyas, inaugurated Dalit conferences at Mangaon and Nagpur.[17] He proclaimed that until untouchables were treated like humans there would be no politics. He was, however, doubtful whether these activities could turn into successful political movements.

4

With Tilak's release from prison in 1914, politics in the country took a new turn. Tilak's main opponents, G.K. Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, died in 1915. Dr.Annie Besant emerged as a major leader. In 1916, the Congress Radicals and Moderates came together with Radicals eventually dominating in the party affairs. Tilak raised the demand for Swarajya and with the help of Dr. Besant launched the Home Rule Movement. He undertook long tours accompanied by Dr. Besant and garnered tremendous support for the movement. Tilak declared, "Swarajya is my birthright and I shall have it." After the World War, the government appointed Montague commission to suggest reforms and it became clear that some power would be devolved on the Indians. To stop the rising anti-govemment sentiment and stem the growing influence of the Congress party, the government began to back parties like the Justice Party in Madras. Though Shahu backed the British government, he was not remiss in secretly helping patriots like Tilak and Arvinda Ghosh

Shahu advocated that the backward classes should get reserved places in independent India's administration. He announced 50% reservation for the backward castes in his own principality. Shahu was all for freedom to the people; but first the causes which enslaved the people must be removed, he felt. Unless the Indian caste system was destroyed totally, real freedom could not last. "The end result of freedom does not mean that power should go only into the hands of the upper class minority. At least for ten years we should have the right to elect caste-wise representatives. We will thus be educated about our rights. The glaring example of our municipality is a clear indicator as to what happens when we do not have reservations."[18] He reiterated that if power was not to be allowed to fall in the hands of the Brahmin oligarchy, the people had to be aware of their rights. "People from all castes should be given the opportunity to be responsible in all fields, whether social,

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industrial, educational or in government jobs. This is what I term caste-wise representation. There is no hatred for anyone here but an attempt to allow the backward caste people to progress. Don't carry them on your shoulders, encourage them to walk instead. Don't lay obstacles before them. Our efforts are to give them strength."[19]

Shahu therefore asked for caste-wise representation and for a separate electorate for the Marathas. He wanted to introduce in Bombay Presidency the politics of the Justice Party of Madras. He exhorted the non-Brahmins to hold conferences to discuss the issue of proper distribution of power. In a letter to Lord Willingdon, he expressed the view that the new constitution of India should provide separate electorates to all backward castes which, according to him, would broaden the foundations of democracy.[20]

Shahu felt that knowledge of their rights was the foundation on which the awareness of non-Brahmins and Dalits should be based. The backward classes should get the benefits of education to face changing times. To fight for their rights, he encouraged people to start their own party, independent of the Congress party. The 'Deccan Rayat Association' was thus launched at the Satyashodhak Conference at Nipani in 1916. In 1917, its secretary Walchand Kothari demanded caste-wise representation in the Councils. The government dismissed this demand of the non-Brahmins, but reserved seven seats for the Marathas in the Bombay Council.[21]

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were declared in 1919. The decision to implement these reforms was taken by the Moderates and the non-Brahmin groups. At the same time, Lokmanya Tilak took the decision to extend limited cooperation to the government and began preparations for elections. Shahu insisted that these reforms should be implemented and the masses should be able to exercise their right to freedom.

Shahu's opponents criticised him because he became involved in politics through the non-Brahmin party. In reality, he had an intense wish to enter politics and appealed to the government to give him permission to contest the elections. This was denied to him.[22] The Maratha League and the non-Brahmin party participated in the elections though. Shahu was appreciative of the non-Brahmin movement in Madras, because he felt it had more unity and an educated leader in Dr. Nayar. Shahu wished the movement in Maharashtra would follow this example.

The Maratha League and the non-Brahmin party participated in the 1920 assembly elections with enthusiasm. Around this time, Mahatma Gandhi had made an entry into national politics. In April 1919, the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre took place. Gandhiji launched a Satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act and got tremendous support from the people. The atmosphere in the country changed and Gandhi declared the non-cooperation movement. N.C. Kelkar contested for the Pune seat on a Congress ticket, while Maharshi Shinde contested this seat on behalf of the Rashtriya Maratha League. The Congress party withdrew from the election. Therefore, only 20 per cent of the

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total electorate actually participated in voting. Shahu did not agree with Shinde's political views. He backed the independent candidate Gupte and Maharshi Shinde was defeated. The percentage of Maratha voters at this time was very low in comparison to their actual population. These elections caused a rift between the Marathas and the other non-Brahmin castes.[23]

Shahu, however, could not perceive that Gandhi's non-cooperation movement was different and broader than Tilak's politics.His opposition to the non-cooperation at that time was somewhat controversial. But Shahu knew all along the greatness of Mahatma Gandhi. Khaserao Jadhav wrote to Shahu in a letter : Gandhi wants to unite India. His method of non-cooperation is quite appealing and the Marathas and other castes might gather under Gandhi's flag.[24] Shahu's health was not keeping well around this time and he was also beset with myriad other problems.

Meanwhile, the Justice party in Madras cornered several seats and secured adequate representation. Shahu wanted the non-Brahmin parties in Maharashtra to get similar success. He thought that Lord Willingdon would be able to assist him in this matter and urged the government not to transfer him to Madras.

5

When Shahu took first steps to help backward classes and bring about social equality, he faced severe opposition from upper castes. Not only did the lower levels of the bureaucracy, well-informed people and newspapers oppose him, they also had the support of a leader like Lokmanya Tilak. The differences between Shahu and Tilak had widened following Vedokta and confiscation of Kulkarni Watans. This led to some unfortunate problems like the 'Tai Maharaj Case'. Shahu knew that the backward classes would not gain their rights easily and that the limited democracy offered by the government was more likely to benefit the Brahmins. He shaped his strategies accordingly.

Shahu's socio-political strategies could be summed up as follows: 1) To create awareness of their rights among backward classes and provide them with opportunities for education and development. 2) To challenge the phoney Brahmin supremacy in religion and encourage people to conduct religious matters themselves according to the Vedas. 3) To unite the non-brahmins for a political party and ensure their proper representation in power.

If Tilak's party had shown some wisdom, understanding and co-operation, Shahu would have found it easier to fight for his movement. Matters became worst when Shahu took the help of the British government to achieve his objectives. True, sometimes Shahu went overboard while displaying support to the British government; it is equally true that that Brahmin arrogance and meanness pushed Shahu to seek the British hand. Brahmins, as the leaders of the society, did not show adequate openness of mind. They even did not support his well thought out social projects, ignoring them contemptuously with caste prejudices.

By stressing on natural rights as the foundation of the backward class

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movement, Shahu helped create a political status for them. This also helped the national struggle in Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Shahu's movements backed by Satysashodhak and the Arya Samaj ideals were aggressive in nature. Shahu insisted that aggressiveness of his movements should not degenerate into violence. Rights should be won with wisdom, love and determination. The path of progress in the 20th century had no place for violence and rioting; development should be achieved through peaceful means. That was his vision.[25]

Being a descendant of Shivaji, a champion of freedom, Shahu was in two minds about the practical course for independence. And though he was obliged to back the British government, he also worked passionately for political rights of the masses. He knew that the freedom movement was steadily growing. But given the historical colonial reality of his time and the social forces he championed, it would have been difficult for him to take any other stand. After Mahatma Gandhi's entry into the political arena in 1920-21, he should not have backed the British government to the extent he did. He could accomplish many worthy objectives by keeping silent on this front. Even so, we must admit, the British, who understood Shahu's predicament and knew of his integrity, brought heavy pressure on him to ensure his public support. He was even forced to support a journalist like Chirol. Public opinion was against the government and despite their best efforts, only 20 per cent of the electorate had participated in the 1920 elections. Of these, the majority were non-Brahmins. In short, these were the indicators that the Indian political scene was taking a new direction.

Shahu certaainly recognised these new signs in politics and encouraged the working class in Bombay to form unions and take power into their hands. Meanwhile, the despotic rules in Russia and Germany had been destroyed and was replaced by the power of the workers. In England too the labour class was becoming more influential. Citing these examples, he proclaimed that all adults should have the right to vote. The government should work according to the wishes of the masses. Labour organisations should develop throughout the country.[26] In other words, Shahu had his finger on the pulse of a changing world.

A singular important factor of Shahu's strategies was that he always put into practice in his own principality what he preached to others. Among these were reservations, free and compulsory primary education, and appropriate and equal distribution of power. People trusted him and he was invited to guide the people in North India and Madras. Being an active reformer, he received a lot of support for his social and political policies.

Through his policies, Shahu created awareness among the backward classes about their social and political rights. It was in no small measure that these activities of Shahu, albeit in a small principality impelled the national movement to take notice of sensitive problems like caste equality and untouchability. Though his movements did take the help of the British rulers occassionally, Shahu's actual aims were pro-democracy and progressive.

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With Rajarshi Shahu's death, the first phase of the backward class movement came to an end. The second phase began under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

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16.

Shahu and Muslim Community

Hussain Jamadar
Muslim Satyashodak Activist and Writer

Rajarshi, a Missionary

Dhananjay Keer, the well known biographer of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja delivered three lectures in 1970 at Shivaji University, Kolhapur where he referred to him as a *Preshit*, a prophet. This is an apt title, given to Shahu by a scholar of national reputation.

The *Preshit* visits the earth for the good of the world, to remove injustice and atrocities. He gives the world a new religion and a new path. Not only is he aware of the path to salvation; he makes efforts to show us the way to salvation. Rajarshi Shahu lived in an era that had no place for a new religion. However, education and science had given the man new realisation of the path to welfare of mankind.

In Shahu's era orthodox and selfish Brahmindom had monopolised education and deprived the vast masses for centuries whom they treated worst than cats and dogs, particularly the Dalits, under the vile institution of caste system. In the virtual *Brahminocracy* the cream of socio-political and economic wealth was gobbled up by the Brahmin caste leaving all other castes high and dry.

Shahu instinctively understood the horror of the oppressive Brahmindom and staked his throne to overthrow its hegemony. A king with a vision who dedicated his life to ameliorate the poor and the downtrodden and to show them a new path. A *Preshit*, a great soul.

Shahu's life's mission was overall progress of the society. He believed that the Muslims of the country were an inseparable part of the society and they too should walk on the path to progress. Their ignorance should be removed. He was the first ruler of modern India

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who kept this policy in mind while governing his principality. The path he followed was the ideal set by Mahatma Jotirao Phule, who said,

Religion and state make no
difference for man I
Be truthful I For God II
Christians, Mohamedans, Mangs and
Brahmins I
Embrace all I Brothers they are II
Truth the only religion Creator has given I
Why quarrel I My brothers? II

Promoter of Hindu-Muslim Unity

Any ruler who wishes well for his subjects should treat alike all religions, castes and communities. Only then can he handle the reins of the state properly. Knowing this, Shahu articulated his views on Hindu-Muslim unity just when he ascended the throne of Kolhapur on April 2, 1894.

Among the several felicitations after his coronation, Shahu addresed one held by the Sarvajanik Sabha at Hirabaug in Pune where he was honoured with a citation read out by famous moderate leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale. In reply, Shahu referred to earlier Hindu -Muslims riots in Mumbai and Pune and said, "Friendship and peace must prevail between these communities. Though leaders from both communities are already working towards this, leaders of the Sarvajanik Sabha should also make similar efforts."

This speech was not an isolated exhortation of the King. Subsequently, on several occasions Shahu spoke passionately on social unity, religious tolerance and national integration, in which he expressed the hope not only for Hindu-Muslim unity but unity of all religions.

All Religions are Equal

Delivering the presidential address at the 'Akhil Bharatiya Bahishkrut Samaj Conference' held in Nagpur on May 13, 1920, Shahu said, "We are all Indians, we are brothers whatever caste or religion we might belong to. From a personal viewpoint, religion may be important but it should not cause obstacles in the national way of life. Compared to nationalism, religion, is a very minor issue. In short, the meaning of the word 'religion' can be explained as the path to reaching God. Roads from all directions finally meet in large cities like London, Bombay, Calcutta. Travellers have one aim - to reach there quickly and with the least effort. There is no need for people to hate each other because they follow different paths and have different ways of reaching God.

"Whatever be the circumstances when different religions were established; today it is not worth to say that any one religion takes a man to God. It would be false pride for any person to say that only his religion is good and the others are bad."

"In history, people went to war with the ambition to conquer lands. In the times of Akbar and Shivaji, wars were not fought for caste or colour. In Akbar's court, there were plenty of Marathas, Rajputs and other Hindu sardars and soldiers. The number of Muslim soldiers in Shivaji Maharaja's army and that of the Vijayanagar king was also high."

Shahu's teachings to his fellow citizens stressed that all religions were

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equally important and that no one should demean another because of his religion. He cautioned that religion should not be an obstacle in creating a nation.

Delivering the presidential address at the Karnataka Brahmanetar Samajik Parishad held at Hubli in July 1920, Shahu said, "The Muslims, like the Marathas, are warriors. They have similar lifestyles. There were several Muslim sardars in the Maratha army. Similarly, there were Maratha sardars in the Mughal army. Presently, the army of the British government has both Muslims and Marathas serving shoulder to shoulder." Shahu always tried to foster among the masses the view that the Muslim community was an inherent part of India, and that they were not foreigners.

Shahu had great respect for Shivaji Chhatrapati and was proud of the fact that he was his descendant. An example of Shivaji's tolerance for religion was seen when he respectfully used to pick up a Koran on the battlefield and hand it over a Muslim soldier for safekeeping. Before Shivaji, Emperor Akbar showed similar tolerance and generosity towards other religions. In his speech, Shahu praised both Shivaji and Emperor Akbar.

As chief guest at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Udhaji Maratha Students Hostel at Nasik, Shahu said, "Our real Mahatma was Emperor Akbar. He brought unity among Hindus and Muslims and himself married a Rajput lady, Jodhabai, without asking her to change her religion. What would be impossible in the 20th century, was easily done by the Emperor in the 16th century."

Aid to Dargahs and Mosques

Shahu's preaching of Hindu-Muslim unity was accompanied by actions. It is important to note that he treated both religions fairly in his principality. Several instances indicate that he generously contributed to Muslim religious shrines:

1) Shahu made arrangements for drinking water at the dargah of Hazrat Pir Sadhu Khatal at Panhala.

2) On September 2, 1919, he ordered an annual grant of Rs. 300 for the mosque at Patgaon. Prince Rajaram signed the order for grant, which was to come from the income of the Mauni Maharaj Math.

3) On February 6, 1904, Maharaja allotted land for construction of the station mosque in Shahupuri area of Kolhapur. On July 9, 1921, he donated Rs. 1,000 to the mosque.

4) The Muslim community of Kasba Bavada in Kolhapur had made an application seeking land for a mosque. This was sanctioned on October 10, 1917 and government land was handed over to the Muslim community free of charge.

Several such examples of Shahu's generosity are found. Of these, the most important is the grant from the Mauni Maharaj Math to the mosque at Patgaon. The fact that funds for a Muslim religious place came from a Hindu religious institute is of immense significance. Though this might not have done intentionally, there is no doubt that it went a long way in creating unity between the Hindu and Muslim communities.

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Patronage to Muslim Poets and Artistas

Maharaja not only gave donations to Muslim religious institutions, but he also gave royal patronage to poets, artists, singers and wrestlers in the Muslim community.

Shahir Lahari Haider, a resident of Kolhapur, whose ancestral occupation was sharpening blades, was a singer of ballads and folk songs. His evocative ballads covered historical, social and religious topics. He was familiar with Hindu religion and history and his ballad on Shivaji Maharaja was much acclaimed. He had received a prize at the Maharashtra Shahir Sammelan. Among his other famous compositions were one on Sinhagad and another on the Russian Revolution. The much-acclaimed Shahir Piraji Rao Sarnaik was a disciple of Shahir Lahari Haider. Since Lahari had no regular income, Shahu gave him a job at a technical school. He was also given a house in recognition of his creative talents. Later, he became superintendent of the school. Shahir Lahari eventually became a close associate of Shahu and they would often be seen taking rounds of the city in the royal horse carriage. On these rounds, Shahir would take notes for Shahu. He carved an indelible niche for himself in Maharashtra's poetry.

When genius vocalist Alladiya Khan first came to Kolhapur to participate in the Navratri festival at the Mahalaxmi temple, Shahu was so enthralled by his voice, unique style of singing rarely heard in the South that he made Khansaheb a member of his court. The title of court singer was conferred on him. Later, the King and the artiste became so close that former regarded the latter as his brother. Under Shahu's patronage, this talented artiste gained all-India fame. He was conferred the title of'Gaan Maharishi.' Several well-known singers became his disciples. Renowned singer Kesarbai took her last lessons from Khansaheb.

Khansaheb often accompanied Maharaja on important occasions. The two travelled to Delhi to attend on December 12, 1912, the Celebration of the Coronation of Emperor George V.

Alladiya Khan was a firm believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. Several of his compositions were dedicated to the Hindu gods. In the composition, Aaddata (Malkans), he made a reference to the Bhagwat Gita by saying that the whole world has originated from God.

When Alladiya Khan visited Kolhapur in 1942, twenty years after Rajarshi's death, the public enthusiastically gave him a royal felicitation. He was presented a citation and a purse of Rs. 1,000 at the hands of Maharani Tarabai (Regent). After his death, his admirers in Kolhapur erected his commemorative statue.

In recent years, there has been a rise of communal organisations, one of which tried heinously to pull down the statue of Khansaheb. The statue was immediately re-erected by followers of Shahu Maharaja, who demonstrated that Shahu's principles of Hindu Muslim unity had not wilted.

Another well-known Muslim artist was Abalal Rahiman, who was conferred the title of 'Kala Maharishi' by Shahu. He

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went to Mumbai to study and was very confident of standing first in the examinations but his expectations; were shattered. As a result of what he perceived as a grave injustice, he lost his mental balance.

Maharaja was very sympathetic and whenever he got the chance, encouraged the painter to draw. Thanks to this encouragement, Abalal Rahiman created several masterpieces, among them many landscapes that are admired even today. His excellent work earned him the title of 'Rang Samrat'.

Maharaja was also very fond of wrestling and encouraged many Muslim wrestlers. The wrestling exploits of Imambaksh and the Punjabi wrestlers became known to Maharashtra due to Shahu's patronage. Among the well-known Muslim wrestlers of Kolhapur who gained prominence were Kamruddin, Gulam Mohiddin, Ramjan, Khalil Punjabi, Jaani Punjabi, Imambaksh, Rahimbaksh, Hasanbaksh, Gulam Kader, Rajjab Multani, Mohammedin Punjabi, Kadarbaksh and Mohammedbaksh.

Shahu himself was a wrestler and had a Muslim teacher called Balekhan Vastad who accompanied him when he went to Rajkot and Dharwad to study. Shahu gifted his guru with ten acres of land and a mansion in Kolhapur where Balekhan lived. Nearby there was a gymnasium where Rajarshi would occasionally go to practise with his teacher. Balekhan received an honorarium from the court.

Aid to the Muslim Community

Shahu made it a point to involve the Muslim community in several social occassions. For example, at the time of the wedding of his daughter, Akkasaheb, the weddings of several other couples were also held. This was done so that the royal couple could receive the blessings of the masses. Of the 18 weddings he solemnised on March 11, 1908, several couples were Muslims.

Shri Shahu Weavers' Association was an organisation established by weavers in Raibaug. Forty outstation families, of which 20 were Muslim, arrived to work in this organisation. Not only did Maharaja make arrangements for the stay of these poor families, he also gave them land through the court. In addition, he ordered that each family be granted Rs. 150.

Shahu also made changes in the judicial system in an effort to uplift the Muslim community. To put an end to the domination of the upper classes in the judicial system, he gave several youth from the lower classes and Muslim community the *sanads* to practise law. Sheikh Ali Mohammed, Mohammed Hussain, Mirasaheb Chikodikar and Hussain Dadabhai Jamadar were some of the well-known Muslim lawyers of the time.

Establishment of Hostels for Muslims

When Shahu returned from abroad in 1902, he was felicitated by several organisations including the Kolhapur Muslim community where he stressed the need for education among the Muslims. He also assured financial assistance to build a hostel for Muslim students. However, Muslims as a community were so apathetic towards education that

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nothing was done. Shahu himself reserved 10 seats for them at the Victoria Maratha Hostel in order to encourage Muslim students to study further. No Muslim took advantage of this till Sheikh Mohammed Yusuf Abdullah, a student from Athani in Karnataka, became the first student to take admission to this hostel. He completed his further studies in Rajaram College and graduated in 1908. Shahu gave him a job as a district official. Later he became a deputy collector and an official of the Treasury. Shahu entrusted him with the job of promoting education among the Muslim community.

All along, the Rajarshi kept up his efforts to promote education among the Muslim community. These efforts culminated in the establishment of the King Edward Mohammedan Education Society on November 15, 1906. Through this society the decision to start the 'hostel for the Muslim boys' was taken. People from the Muslim community collected a fund of Rs. 1,134 for the Education Society.

Pleased with this development, Shahu gifted them 25,000 sq. ft. of land in Dasra Chowk in Kolhapur to build a hostel. He also contributed a sum of Rs. 5,500 for the building fund and sanctioned an annual grant of Rs. 250 for the same. To cover the expenses of the organisation, he granted them a piece of land which yielded an annual income of Rs. 6,745. He made arrangements for the tickwood required for the construction of the hostel to be given from his jungles at no cost. Madhavrao Bagal noted in his memoirs that the amount Shahu donated for the construction of the Muslim Boarding far exceeded his donations to the Victoria Boarding.

Shahu was attentive to the educational needs of his subjects. He laid down one stipulation while handing over the Muslim Waqf Board to the Muslim community. The condition was that out of the income from the Waqf, only necessary expenses be made in the name of religion. The remaining money was to be utilised to promote education among the Muslim community. Due to this policy, Rs. 15,000 would be annually available for the education of Muslims.

The new hostel encouraged Muslim students from neighbouring districts and even in Karnataka to pursue higher education. Even today, Hindu and Muslim students stay and study in this hostel together. This organisation also runs the Jawaharlal Nehru Urdu-Marathi High School and Junior College. The Muslim community here comprises local Indians who converted to Islam because of circumstances. They therefore have close links with the Dalits and nomadic tribes. In fact, the Muslim Hostel was responsible for taking the lead to form the Muslim OBC Organization.

Translation of the Koran into Marathi

The first act of European religious reformers was to translate Bible in Latin into local languages including English by reformer John Wickliffe. This was done to enable and inspire the common man to read for himself what the religion was all about. With a similar sentiment in mind, Shahu commissioned the translation of the Koran into Marathi, spending Rs. 25, 000 on the project.

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For this, Shahu appointed a committee comprising Hakim Bhorekhan, Abdul Inamdar, Gulam Ahmed Master and a Maluavi. Printing of this translated Koran had begun at the Jainendra Press owned by Kallappa Anna Nitve. However the unexpected death of Shahu stalled progress of this work and according to Mahmoolal Hakim, a member of the court, the work remained incomplete.

There is no doubt that had the translation of the Koran been completed in time, the reformist Muslim movement in Kolhapur would have begun far earlier. Even today, the teaching of the Koran in the Madarassa does not go beyond mere rote learning. Shahu took up the cause of Muslim education because he realised that if people understood the true meaning of the religious texts, the domination of Mullas and Maulavis would end. Superstition too would decline and this would help the community to progress.

In his speeches, Shahu has often generously praised Emperor Akbar's policy of religious tolerance. Just as Emperor Akbar's policy promoted national unity and religious equality, Shahu's thinking and actions nurtured nation's welfare.

In the pre-independence and post-independence days, Hindu-Muslim riots took place in different parts of the country. History shows however that the two communities in Kolhapur lived peacefully and with understanding. Today too, this unity and tolerance can be seen in Kolhapur. Credit for this goes to the reformist and farsighted policies of Shahu Maharaja.

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17.

Shahu Chhatrapati and 'Criminal' Tribes

Laxman Mane
Activist of nomadic tribes, and noted dalit writer

Our social history shows that the ancient Indian culture has evolved in stages. Politically speaking, the country was divided into many kingdoms before the founding of the British rule. It had no unitary character. Hundreds of small and big kings ruled the country. With the British rule, came many fundamental changes in the social structure and the system of governance. The British enforced civil and criminal laws to establish law and order. These evolved into legal codes. They set up a judicial system. Thus began the British rule of the law in India.

On the face of it, it seems two powers existed side by side in the country during this period: the East India Company and the Indian States. But there was one more power. That of the various tribal communities. Scholars have referred to these as the "lands of tribal communities." In a way, these have to be treated as 'nationalities' as they were totally independent entities. They had their separate laws and rules. Their own judicial system. Their *panchayats* used to decide civil and criminal cases. And the tribals were not prepared to abide by any law other than that of their *panchayats*. (Even today, there continues the tradition of an independent code of laws among many tribal communities.)

The British conquered India in stages. They dismissed many kings and annexed their kingdoms. Thousands of soldiers in the states so annexed, or serving kings who agreed to accept British protection, lost their work. Many of the soldiers thus rendered unemployed formed groups across the country and took to crime as *Pendharis* or *Thugs* to earn a livelihood. These groups had many tribal soldiers.

The British used to claim that maintenance of law and order in the areas they rule was their main priority. So they enforced a law in 1793 directing their officers to keep an eye on the roving criminal gangs in their areas. They began to curb their activities in the Bombay Presidency

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after they ended the Maratha reign and took over power. In 1827, they instructed the administration to initiate steps like restraining night movements of criminal tribes and asking the village *Patil* to keep an eye on them.

The British approach to the criminal tribes is made clear by the remarks of Bombay Governor Elphinstone in his History of India. Says he: "Society has no sympathy whatsoever for the criminal tribes. People think that the tribes must be given the most stringent punishment here in this life as well as in the life after death." The British attitude was similar to the Indian society at the time. It went on hardening with time.

In 1836 and 1860, the British promulgated orders to take strong action against organized dacoits and robbers. The Indian Penal Code introduced in 1860 had a provision of stringent punishment for such crimes. But the provision of heavy punishments did not lead to reduction of criminal people in these tribes.According to the K.M. Munshi report, more than a third of the total prisoners towards the end of the 19th century were from these tribes. The torture or the reform efforts in jails had no effect on them. On the contrary, they used to become shameless. Often, these tribes would hand over an innocent tribesman to the police and protect the tribal head.

Then came the 1857 revolt against the British rule. Many factors led to it. Among them, a major reason was the British intervention in the Hindu law, traditions and religion as also in the internal administration of the tribal communities. Tribal communities too participated in revolt along with Princes and rebel soldiers. There are several instances of many tribal leaders dying on the battlefield or being sent to the gallows after the revolt ended (See the list of martyrs on the 1857 pillar near the statue of Pratapsinh Maharaja at Satara).

The British, having succeeded in crushing the 1857 revolt now adopted a more cautious approach in governance. They decided on the policy of non-intervention in the internal matters of the Indian society. An assurance to that effect was included in the 1858 declaration of the British Queen. The British also assessed the danger potential of the armed tribal communities and promulgated the Criminal Communities Act in 1871.

This law was based on three assumptions of a scholar of tribal communities, T.V. Stephens:

1) A person born in a criminal tribe is a born criminal because he takes up the profession of the father.

2) Such a born criminal continues to be a criminal throughout his life because he believes that it is his fate and that it is his *dharma* (duty).

3) A person so engaged in crime soon becomes a skilled criminal. As castes and professions merge into one in India, criminal tribes believe that committing crime itself is what the religion ordains them, adds Stephens. They don't find anything wrong in it.

The British law of 1871 was based on the assumptions of Stephens. In drafting it, they had made no attempt whatsoever to understand the tribals leading a nomadic life. On the contratry, being

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branded as born criminals, thousands of families of these tribes were sent to open jails across the country. This open jail had triple barbed wire fencing. Those supposed to be hard-core criminals were kept in a circular compound at the centre of the jail. They had to wear a red headgear. The next circular compound accommodated slightly less dangerous criminals. They had to wear a yellow headgear. The least dangerous of the criminals would be placed within the third compound. They had a green headgear. Thus families of the criminal tribes were herded as cattle. There used to be watchmen at the exit points. Without their permission, nobody could go out or come in. If the behaviour of a person or a family was deemed to have improved, he or they would be allowed to live in the adjoining free colony. But there too, they would have to report thrice a day to the authorities. The British set up such 'settlements' for the criminal tribes across the country.

The people in the settlements had to face torture in many ways. Many men and women were such victims. Many used to be lured into agreeing to conversion. Anyone absent at the roll call would face physical torture. Often, this led to death. The British implemented the law ruthlessly. They had adopted a policy under which these branded tribes were not kept in the province they hailed from. They were shifted and kept in isolation in a distant province. For example, Kaikadi and Korvi communities were shifted to Maharashtra from Tamil Nadu. Ghantichor, Uchle, Bajigar, Takari and Bhamte were brought from Telangana. Pardhis came from Rajasthan, Wadars from Orissa and Andhra, and Kanjarbhats from Punjab. Berads and Ramoshis from Maharashtra were taken to Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu settlements, I came across Marathi-speaking people wearing *langotis* like Pardhis.

At a time when the tribals across the country were suffering such terrible life, a great man was born. He completely rejected the idea of a born criminal or anybody remaining a criminal all his life. He felt that such a reasoning was a blot on humanity. While the entire country accepted the tainted law of the criminal tribes, this great man refused to implement it in his principality. He offered affectionate shelter to these tribes. This great man with not even the sky as the limit for his love was Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja. Even today, Pardhi *tandas* treat Shahu as a god. The total devotion of Pardhis to Shahu exemplifies their innocence, and faith. Says Annappa Chavan of Uchgaon near Kolhapur: "We have democracy now. But does it love us? The great man who had affection for us is Shahu Raja. He accepted us was human beings. He taught us to live like human beings. To us he is God."

Once Shahu was at Katkol. He came to know that Phasepardhis had been harassing the people by thefts. He also heard that Phasepardhis planned to hit his own camp. His camp was well guarded. He dispatched his soldiers and arrested the Phasepardhis and imprisoned them. However, he did not trouble them in any way. He provided nice things for them in prison. He had his own way of handling the downtrodden. He was of the opinion that a human being would normally not

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choose to hurt others. He wondered why these people took to such life. What was the reason that forced them to choose such a path. He wanted to know all this.

After a few days, Shahu summoned some of the Phasepardhis and asked them:

"Why do you steal? Do you like to go to prison?"

"Who will like prisons," they replied.

"Then why do you steal?"

"To survive."

" Why don't you work?"

"We catch birds. But that is not enough to feed us. We can't do anything else. And because of our history, nobody wants us around. Who will give us work? And we know nothing other than laying traps for birds and archery."

"So you break into houses?"

"What else can we do to survive? If we get enough to live on, why will we go about stealing. We know it is not good. But then hunger pangs turn our head and we start struggling to survive."

Shahu had found the root cause behind the criminal acts of the tribe. He was moved. If we don't solve the problem of hunger, people will be forced to lead a life of crime. He took the Phasepardhis and their families to Sontali Camp and arranged ration for each family.

Phasepardhis is a brave, hardy and dependable community. They would even sacrifice their life to keep their word. Shahu was determined to help them live like normal human beings. He began to always think about how to bring their life on the right track. At last he reached a decision and appointed some of them as guards on his very camp. This was like amaking thieves as guards. But Shahu did it. The result: The Phasepardhis made the camp's security system near perfect.

Shahu had in his employment persons from many such communities like Pardhi, Kanjarbhat, Kuchkorvi, Makadwale, Dombari and Kolati. They worked as bodyguards, members of his hunting party or in watch and ward department. The land (about 600 acres), where the Shivaji University campus now stands, was awarded by him to the Pardhi and Kanjarbhat community.

After independence, the government took over from the Kanjarbhats the land needed for creating university education facilities for the people. But even now, Kanjarbhats have about 300 acres of that land in their possession. The land on which now stands the Dombarwada in Udyamnagar in Kolhapur was also given by Shahu. But encroachment by outsiders has forced the Dombarwada to shrink. Shahu had also given land at the Kawla Naka to Makadwalas as also the land of Rajput Bhamtas at Sontali Camp. These people treat Shahu as God not because he gave them these lands but because he accepted them as his own, openly supported them at a time when society didn't want them. They believed him to be God because he treated them as human beings. Shahu had around him some men who dressed well, observed traditional etiquettes, spoke wise and sweet things but were motivated by vested interests. They used flattery to accomplish their selfish goals. Shahu hated people with these tendencies. He preferred honest Phasepardhis to such people. The Phasepardhis were rustics. They were not

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sophisticated in their speech. They called him by the name without the civil honorifics. Their clothes used to be torn and dirty. But beneath the filthy exterior, lay their inner self, pure and fiercely loyal. Shahu prized it as much as the very Earth.

Shau once decided to test the loyalty of the Phasepardhis. He had another motive too. He wanted to find out if Phasepardhis succumb to the pressures of the bigwigs around him. He sent a message to his brother Bapusaheb to immediately rush to Sontali Camp and orally ordered Phasepardhis on guard duties not to allow anyone in. Bapusaheb arrived after an hour. Phasepardhis on guard duty stopped him. Bapusaheb was angry. But Phasepardhis insisted on just one thing: that they were told by Shahu not to let anyone in. Bapusaheb tried to reason with them that he was Shahu's brother and that Maharaja had asked him to rush immediately to the camp. But the guards wouldn't listen. Bapusaheb lost his temper. The guard said: "I won't violate raja's order. I won't allow you in. If you want to go in, take this gun, shoot me, and then proceed. I am saying this because you are the brother of Maharaja." Shahu, who watched all this, came out and escorted Bapusaheb in. Shahu welcomed with open arms the jungle community with such fierce loyalty. He did all he could to bring these human outcasts in the social mainstream.

Shahu deployed some Phasepardhis on works such as road construction and maintenance, building dams, and digging wells. Some were included in the hunting party. Some were sent to other principalities to catch rare bird and animal species and bring them to him. He provided these people with identity cards from his Durbar and appealed to other principalities to cooperate with them. At Sontali Camp itself, he introduced a novel scheme for Phasepardhis. As he himself could not offer employment to them all, he launched a housing scheme known as build and demolish scheme. He used to deploy Phasepardhis to build houses using stone and mud. The house would not stand the rainy season. Then Shahu would ask them to build again. This process continued. Rather than giving them free ration and making them lazy dependents, this experiment of Shahu taught them the dignity of labour.

The move to treat the hated criminal outcasts as human beings was a great humanitarian experiment launched in the social laboratory at Sontali Camp. This wise King had correctly realised that hunger was the source of cruelty and crime. One can't lead the hungry onto the righteous path by sermonising on ethics, nor can their problems be solved by harsh sentences. Shahu Maharaja had come to believe that one has to examine the roots of the criminal tendencies of these tribes and remove the causes to solve the problem. He acted on these lines.

Shahu was like mother and father to these nomadic tribesmen. Mother's love and father's affection unifies in God. That's why, the tribes which were forsaken by society treated him like God. In their faith can be seen the concrete face of the social revolution brought about by Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja.

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18.

Shahu and His Guru Sir Fraser

Prin. R. K. Kanbarkar
Former Vice-Chancellor, Shivaji University, Kolhapur

Born in a small *jahagir* of Kagal, Yashvantrao was adopted to the Kolhapur throne as Shahu Chhatrapati at the age of 10. At of 20, on April 2, 1894, Shahu assumed royal duties as Chhatrapati. Unlike other Princes, he did not adopt the path of least resistance. For the next 28 years, he chose to take on his own people as also the aliens successfully to create a new society based on social equality reducing distance between man and man. He created his image as the reformer who espoused the cause of Dalits and the prophet of the commoners. He met death a satisfied man, without a trace of fear. He led a life worthy of a great soul and bid us goodbye with a mature mind. Here is an attempt to trace the motivations and inspirations behind the life and work of this king with a difference.

Shivaji's Heritage

The origin of the metamorphosis in the life of this Prince can be traced to two sources. After being adopted to be the head of the seat established by Chhatrapati Shivaji, Shahu never forgot that he was to maintain the glory of the seat. He always held close to his heart Shivaji as a deity, as an ideal for administration. Soon after taking over administration, he issued a brief manifesto. The *Shivshak* referred to in it says it all. The *Shak* (calendar)launched by Chhatrapati Shivaji on his coronation continued for 104 years. In 1777, when Shahu II assumed power at Satara, Peshwa's administrators Sakharambapu and Nana Phadnis discontinued it. Shahu recalled that *Shivshak* as soon as he assumed the power. This is an indication how his mind worked. Shahu was not just talking of the heritage of Chhatrapati's family, he was eager to continue with the Chhatrapati's welfare policies for the people. And

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once he started on that path, he did not waver in the face of mountainous difficulties He was willing to give up the throne but would not compromise on his goal of amelioration of the *Bhahujan Samaj* just because the British authorities wanted him to do so.

Sir Stewart Mitford Fraser

The realisation that he was carrying on the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji did indicate to Shahu how he should go about the administration, but he was fortunate to have Sir Stewart Mitford Fraser as a teacher and guide in his life at that juncture. Fraser supported Shahu at every step, encouraged him, gave him company throughout his life and moulded his personality.

Fraser was an ICS officer in the British India service. He had worked as the assistant collector at Nashik and as the political agent at Dang and Surgana for four years. In 1889, the Government of India appointed Fraser as the tutor and guardian Shahu Maharaj, his brother Bapusaheb, Chief of Kagal and Kunwarsaheb of Bhavnagar (Bhausinghji) at the monthly salary of Rs. 1,000. The government order said Fraser should stay at Dharwad and organise the education of the princes. (1) Fraser reported at Kolhapur on May 22,1889. The education of the princes started at Dharwad on June 11. Thus the teacher-disciple relationship between Shahu and Fraser began in May 1889. It continued until May 6, 1922, when Shahu passed away. Fraser retired from Government of India service on December 31, 1919. But his strong bond of friendship with Shahu continued after retirement.

The Shahu-Fraser ties that lasted 33 years are important in many ways. From May 1889 to 1894, Fraser was the teacher and guardian of Shahu Maharaja. He was the assistant judge at Dharwad and Belgaum from October 1895 to March 1896, tutor and companion of the Mysore Maharaja from 1896 to 1902, Political Agent at Gwalior for a short while during 1904, officiating deputy secretary at Culcatta and Shimla from 1904 to 1906 and then Political Agent in Mysore and the Resident at Hyderabad. Fraser retired from Government service in December 1919 and returned to England in May 1920.

Shahu-Fraser Correspondence

Of the 33 years, the first four were spent at Dharwad in ashram-type education. After his stint as teacher, Fraser was appointed as an ICS officer in other principalities and at other places. But his correspondence with Shahu continued uninterrupted. He used to write even during his holidays in England. Shahu also kept Fraser informed about the difficulties faced in the administration, the differences with the Resident and the Political Agent and the consequent misunderstandings, and sought his counsel. It is not possible to guess exactly the number of letters the teacher and the disciple exchanged in nearly 30 years. Some letters referred to while sending an answer are not available. Most of the letters written by Fraser to Shahu are available. But not all of those written by Shahu to Fraser. Many of them were secretive in nature and could have been destroyed for that reason.

The letters can be divided into three categories on the basis of contents.

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1) Shahu seeks his teacher's advice and Fraser offers it without reservation. 2) Fraser brings to Shahu's notice some good reforms initiated by other princes. 3) Some letters exchange inquiries and information about interaction between the two families and the gifts exchanged by them. In the same category can be included letters describing hunting trips. Both Shahu and Fraser were good hunters. Their letters contain interesting descriptions of hunting of elephant, tiger, cheetah, wild pigs and birds. They refer to injuries and accidents during hunting expeditions. Often there are descriptions of incidents in which their very life was in danger.

This special kind of Fraser-Shahu relationship has not been studied much. Their correspondence is a key to the understanding of the two men. Because the fond letters written by two friends are like a clean mirror. Nothing is hidden there. These can help clear some misunderstandings aboutboth men. The events like the Poison Case, Vedokta movement, ties with the British, non-Brahmin party, and revival of the Satyashodhak Samaj will become clearer if studied in the light of this correspondence. The answer to, as mentioned in the Kolhapur Gazetteer, whether Fraser was a colonialist could also be found here.

The English *avatar* of the Indian *acharya*

The British officers who came to India during the Raj can be classified into three categories: 1) Some behaved like conquerors ruling the vanquished people in India. For them, India was a rich golden mine meant to be exploited. They did not find anything wrong in this approach. Robert Clive and Warren Hastings represent this class. 2) The officers in this class looked upon Indians as the white man's burden, they came as servants of God to save the Indians. These include missionaries, and officers like Macaulay, Bentick and Fergusson, who tried to spread education and eradicate superstition. 3) Though small in number this category of officers, seems to have been conquered by the culture and lifestyle of the conquered. They mingled completely with Indian life. Their interest in India helped them to cross the boundaries of racial prejudices.

Sir Stewart Mitford Fraser falls in the third category. As gentleman, he was a simple and a thinking person. He had no arrogance of the British officers. He was no flatterer. He was not just a teacher to Shahu, he was his guardian too. Fraser-Shahu relations exemplify ideal teacher-disciple bond. Such closeness between a teacher and the student is rare in the present educational system. Really speaking, Fraser was in the mould of the Indian *acharyas* like Vashishth and Sandipani.

Fraser systematically organised the education of the princes at Dharwad. The day-to-day programme was implemented meticulously. The programme started on June 11, 1889 and the first progress report of the princes was sent to the Kolhapur Durbar on April 11,1890. Writes Fraser: "He (Shahu) is not clever but he has very good common sense and a fairly good memory, added to which he is genuinely anxious to learn and takes pains and interest in his lessons... His English

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conversation has distinctly improved both in correctness and ease, ... He is totally free from bumptiousness and I have seen many little instances of unselfishness and thoughtfulness on his part."[2]

Shahu had understood the importance of education. But he learnt more by observation than from books. He did not shun classes, especially Fraser's lectures on successful administration. His English was good, conversation polished. His reading was not very extensive, but he was a good listener. His lectures prove that.

Three tours with Fraser

Led by Fraser, Shahu went on three study tours across India along with other princes. Two in the North and one in the South. These travels were a part of the education of the princes. Fraser has described them extensively in his booklet, *Three Tours in India and Ceylone.* Shahu and the princes were to see cities and historical places, and meet officials and princes during the tour. The reactions of Shahu to the incidents during the tours and his dialogue with Fraser on them helped towards moulding the personality of Shahu. The first 4,899-mile tour included visits to Nashik, Jabalpur, Allahabad, Culcatta, Darjiling, Lucknow, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Rajkot and Ajmer. The booklet has important references to the harassment of Shahu by Brahmin priests at Nashik, his refusal to bathe in a dirty tank at Kashi, and his curiosity about the tea gardens of Darjiling. When after seeing the Taj Mahal, Shahu proceeded to Fatehpur Sikri, the religious tolerance Akbar seen there made him thoughtful. The Hindu temple built for Maharani Jodhabai near the mosque, the palace of the Portuguese queen and a white Jain temple gave an idea to Shahu about Akbar's secular outlook. He also saw the ruins of the Hindu temples, which had seen the ire of the religious fanatic, Auranzeb. The history and geography of these places had an impact on Shahu that no bookish lectures by the dozen would have achieved. The root of the recognition of Kolhapur as a secular town lies here. As they went seeing places, liberal Fraser would bring out their educational importance through his comments and explanations. He writes in his report:

"The places seen had each helped to stock their minds with pictures of scenery, buildings and history in a way that reading could never have done, and the first fruits of the many new ideas gained on the tour have been already noticed in the general brightening of their conversation."[3]

The second tour of the princes during November-December covered south India and Ceylone. The itinerary included Bijapur, Hyderabad, Madras, Pondicherry, Tanjavur, Tutikorin, Colombo, Candy and Bangalore, Mysore on the way back. Hunting expeditions and meetings with officials and princes were regular part of the tour. The princes got to learn the etiquettes to be followed in such public functions during such meetings. They also discussed the history of their dynasties.

The third tour in the winter of 1892 covered the western region in the North. It covered Mount Abu, Jodhpur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Mathura, Vrindavan, Sarangpur, Haridwar, Amritsar, Peshawar,

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Lahore, Multan, Sakkar, Hyderabad and Karachi. It seems Fraser had a good grip over Indian history and geography. His comments on the areas visited, the traditions prevalent there and the history of the region, used to be full of insight. Shahu Maharaja saw the horse breeding system at Alwar, irrigation channel network in Punjab, and the beautiful sculptures at Abu. It was Fraser's honest effort to turn the princes, who would soon shape the future of their principalities, into able and sensitive beings.

Preparing for governance

The last progress report on Shahu was submitted on April 13, 1894 after his coronation.[4] It contains a report on Shahu's tour of the principality along with Fraser. The knowledge gained from the outside world in the four years now found a new dimension. After learning about governance, it was necessary now to have a close look at the people and the region he was going to rule over, and their actual condition. This tour was more useful than proceeding to England for further studies. The tour included visits to Hatkanangale, Ichalkaranji, Shirol, Kurundwad, Nipani, Gadhinglaj, Malkapur and Amba. Fraser's intention was to acquaint Shahu with urban and rural, fertile and hilly, and *adivasi* areas and the diverse customs and traditions of the people there. Shahu visited offices, hospitals, judicial courts and schools and saw their working. He got an idea about the extent of the benefits of the policies of the principalities reaching the poor and the poorer *adivasis* living in hilly areas. The people, who had had no king for decades, welcomed Shahu with joy and enthusiasm.

Fraser had suggested that Shahu be trained in law and administrative machinery by specialists. He also felt that it was necessary for Shahu to do some other reading. He wished that Shahu became an ideal ruler. Ultimately, it was decided that Fraser should deliver some extention lectures and cover the topics. So Fraser conducted a three-month course on law, judiciary, Indian Penal Code and administration for Shahu. During this period, Shahu read a very useful book, *Letters to a Prince,* by Mama Paramanand, a contemporary of Mahatma Phule. During the coronation ceremony, Governor Lord Harris paid glowing tributes to the work done by Stewart Mitford Fraser as the teacher of Shahu. He said: "It has been your good fortune to have not merely as a tutor but your friend and companion as well, Mr. Fraser who, intent on that high ideal... has given an unrelenting and an affectionate solicitude to his important task."[5]

Education as *Samskara*

Thus ended Shahu's education under Fraser which began at Dharwad in May 1889 and continued until April 1894. The education by Fraser, his personality, and his outlook on life left a permanent impression on Shahu. Shahu's great love for simple living and a hard life has its roots in the teachings of Fraser. During this period, Fraser wrote two letters to Shahu on important occasions in his personal life. They are important. Fraser wanted Shahu to realize the importance of the two major events of *vratabandh* (thread ceremony) and marriage. The rituals in thread ceremony are no mere rituals. They have a hidden meaning, which is vital. But we make fuss only

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about the rituals at the cost of the original intention of the ritual. Thread ceremony takes place at an important juncture in life. It is the time of transition from childhood to adulthood. It's the time when a person's attitude towards life is formed. Writes Fraser: "You will now give thought to more serious things and begin to feel more the responsibility for your thought and actions." (March 22, 1891)[6] Even on the occasion of Shahu's wedding, Fraser's advice, along with good wishes, was that marriage is not merely a festival of joy, it is also a responsibility accepted in the name of God.[7]

In a letter on May 17, 1891, Fraser reveals to Shahu the secret of success in life. Shahu should pay special attention to three things, Fraser writes.

" 1. Carefulness in reading, writing and composition.

2. Neatness not only in handwriting but in dress

3. Thoroughness not only in preparation of lessons but in all you do, whether work or games. Bear these three words in mind. Carefulness, Neatness, Thoroughness."[8]

A letter written after Shahu's marriage is typical of Fraser. Only a guru like Fraser can write like that to his student. Fraser wrote to Shahu from Bangalore on December 16, 1891 about a delicate matter. At the time of marriage the age of the Queen was not even 12. The Government of India had just then enacted a law making physical relations with a girl less than 12 years in age a crime. Doctors are also of the opinion that such physical relationship is not proper. Shahu's father too had indicated that Shahu should not marry before the age of 18. Continues Fraser: "I want you to give me a solemn promise on your word of honour as a gentleman, that you will not have access to young Rani till 1894, when she will be of proper age." In the same letter Fraser writes: This will be in the interest of the Kolhapur throne too. The government too is of the opinion that the Kolhapur principality will not have to go in for another adoption again.[9] A Fraser-like guru, who seeks such weird promises from the disciple, must be rare indeed!

Father Figure Fraser

Fraser went to England in May 1894. His term as Shahu's teacher had ended. But Fraser's teaching and Shahu's learning did not stop there. Education never ends. And a real teacher never retires. This education continued for another 30 years until Shahu's death. It continued through correspondence. Shahu used to keep Fraser informed about the difficulties faced in governance and seek his advice. Fraser used to suggest solutions as an elder advisor. He even anticipated probable difficulties in Shahu's plans and inform him accordingly. Like a father, Fraser kept a watchful eye from wherever he was on the evolution of Shahu as an ideal ruler. In a letter on May 30, 1894, Fraser expressed satisfaction over the methodology used by Shahu to clear the pending work and advised him to give more powers to the assistant judges so that the principal judge can be entrusted only with civil appeals. Shahu worried over the incoming new Political Agent. Fraser bolstered his spirits saying he had no reason to fear any Political agent if his

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governance was transparent and open. On the backdrop of the inclination of Shahu and his brother Bapusaheb towards hunting, Fraser suggests that some rules be formulated to avoid needless killing of animals on a large scale so that ecological balance is maintained; and killing of female bisons, a species being reduced, should be avoided.[10]

Frazer's letter of October 25, 1894, from England seems to have been written taking considerable risk, all because of Fraser's affection for Shahu. The note at the end asks him to tear off the letter after reading it.The letter discusses the personal life of the Kolhapur *divan*. He was linked with a woman. People gossiped about it. Fraser advises Shahu to tell the *divan* to immediately end that relationship. If the *divan* refuses, sack him. You are the king. Act like one.[11]

In October 1895, Fraser was appointed a judge at Dharwad-Belgaum. In a letter from Belgaum on March 22, 1896, Fraser offers some suggestions on the New Palace which had developed cracks. Fraser writes that a New Palace be examined by an expert from Bombay Government and the necessary remedial measures undertaken immediately. Thus, it can be seen that Fraser, even when he was posted outside, was quite aware about the Kolhapur happenings.[12]

Shahu replies that New Palace has been examined. He also mentions the reforms implemented in administration. He writes that he could examine the working of offices minutely because of his two-year experience in the main office. At one place, an accused was detained without inquiry for five months. Shahu writes that he had issued an order to collect information about all persons in simple detention for more than a month. Shahu informs his guru, who is well aware of the importance of education that he had issued orders to open a school for girls at Gadhinglaj and for Muslims at Panhala. In a letter on June 16, 1896, Fraser counsels Shahu to keep out of the quarrel between Colonel Hunter and Major Ray.[13]

Soon Fraser was transferred as the tutor and companion of the Maharaja of Mysore. A letter written from Mysore is important. The Mysore palace caught fire suddenly at the time of the marriage of the princess. As there was no fire fighting equipment, the loss was considerable. Fraser remembered his pupil. He guessed that the situation at New Palace must be the same. So he immediately wrote to Shahu to provide for fire fighting engines immediately. He did not forget to fill in details like having buckets filled with water in the pandal at the time of functions as also a hand pump.[14] The letter is a testimony to how much caring Fraser was about his pupil.

Poisoning Episode

The charge of poisoning a British officer was the first test of Shahu's character in his early days as the ruler. Shahu suffered considerable mental harassment during this trying period. The person who stood behind him like a rock and backed him in this controversy was Fraser. A dozen letters exchanged by the two on the episode are available. Fraser advises his pupil not to lose balance but to act with courage after careful thought.

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Shahu expresses his concern over the episode in the letter dated November 25, 1899. The Ray couple (Col. Ray, the Political Agent) had conspiring nature. Although Shahu worked hard without a break, the Rays spread word that he was neglecting administration. Shahu wished to convey the facts to the Governor, but he could not get an appointment to meet him. Shahu expresses all his emotions in the matter to Fraser like a son.[15] Frazer's reply to this of November 29, 1889, throws light on the unique bond of friendship between the two. Fraser advises him to act carefully and with restraint and says: "Be patient and do not lose heart or do anything rash or hasty." [16]

Shahu's relationship with Col. Ray was strained. Poisoning was an allegation. Shahu was absolutely clean in the matter. Soon, the Bombay CID officers made their report that the charge of poisoning was a lie and framed. A proud and self-respecting Shahu could have acted rashly in those circumstances. So Fraser advises him to act carefully and with courage and restraint. He asks him not to take sides in the quarrel between the officers and act so as to reinforce confidence in his impartiality. Fraser told him that a meeting with the Governor was his right, insist on it, and put your side before the Governor without holding back anything. After offering such counsel to his 'Indian' friend against his own brethren, Fraser says: "In any case, my dear Maharaja, do not lose heart and by any rash or hasty act give your ill-wishers a handle against you. " Fraser writes in the NB: "Patience, Maharaja, and stick to it." Such letters show the intimacy between Shahu and Fraser and carry us into a world of pure friendship beyond racial discrimination.

Fraser has made many minor practical suggestions in reply to Shahu's letter written during a particularly depressing mood. He writes about how Shahu should behave during his meeting with the Governor, what he should speak about and which documents he should carry. He tells Shahu to carry copies of the earlier correspondence, think over the statements to be made during the meeting, and prepares notes on them. He suggests that there was no point in hiding the fact that his relations with the Political Agent were strained, and that he should not raise his voice needlessly while mentioning Mr. and Mrs. Ray. Fraser concludes with words of encouragement: "Stick to it, Maharaja, this is the time to show what a man is made of."

Fraser returns after a three-month vacation in England and congratulates Shahu on getting the title of Maharaja in a letter from Bangalore. He expresses the confidence that now Shahu will be able to take determined steps ahead without believing in rumours.[17]

Shahu's Trip Abroad

Around this time, Shahu was invited to the coronation ceremony of the British king. Fraser knew that Shahu was reluctant to go abroad leaving his principality. But attending the coronation was a golden opportunity. He could see the developed countries in the West, learn a lot of new things, establish good relations with British officers, see new cities, factories and people closely, and become more mature. Fraser writes from Bangalore to convince Shahu on accepting the invitation to the coronation.[18] Fraser

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advises Shahu like a father would to a son on how to behave in England, the clothes he should wear on various occasions, and the cities and industrial centers he should visit. In the same letter, Fraser writes: "As to the question whether to go or not, I say emphatically, Go. The coronation will be such a sight as you will never see again and you are fitted by character as by knowledge and rank to benefit by the trip as well as enjoy it."

The letter shows how much Fraser cared for Shahu's welfare. Shahu writes to him requesting him to accompany on tour as companion by taking a three-month leave, or, if that was not possible, to suggest another person as companion. Shahu also wanted to have a civilian as the new Political Agent but Fraser advises him that it won't be prudent to suggest that to the Governor.[19]

Shahu went on the tour of England and other countries in Europe from May 17, 1902 to August 31,1902. Brother Bapusaheb and divan Sabnis accompanied him. British officer Sir Claude Hill went as companion. Fraser's wife went to England by the same boat. The Cambridge University honoured Shahu with the honorary degree of L.L.D. Fraser wrote to him congratulating him and explaining to him the importance of the degree. Writes Fraser: "No Brahmin in the state will be able then to touch you in the way of Academic Awards."[20]

Frazer wrote these words on the background of the *Vedokta* episode. The letter proves how involved Fraser was on the side of his pupil in that episode. While on a three-month leave in England in 1902, Fraser writes on September 25 to congratulate Shahu on a successful foreign tour. He expresses the confidence that the government will take his side in the ongoing struggle with Brahmins. He is optimistic that Shahu would succeed in recreating harmonious atmosphere between various communities.[21]

The *Vedokta* Controversy

Like the poisoning episode, the Vedokta chapter too was a severe test for Shahu. On one side was Shahu, and on the other was the whole Brahmindom of Maharashtra led by Lokmanya Tilak. The case was fought at the level of the Bombay Government and then taken to the Viceroy only to defame and dethrone Shahu. As the controversy continued from October 1901 to May 1905, Shahu suffered a lot and spent many sleepless nights. He had to take decisions on many vital matters. There were many moments of acid test. It was Fraser who stood behind Shahu during this difficult phase. True friendship is tested during such times. Fraser passed that test. He was certain that Shahu's was the side of truth and justice. He knew the cunningness of Brahmins. He saw that Shahu was fighting for a just cause and was acting in a just way although he had all the power. Fraser's is a rare example of a British officer who risked his career to back a vassal of the empire.

In a letter from London on August 4,1903, Fraser offers invaluable guidance to Shahu. He congratulates Shahu for getting all the rights of the vassal, hiterto held, from the government held but offers him the wise counsel of using them judiciously in the present situation. About the *Vedokta* controversy, he urges Shahu

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to convince all the vassals and carry them with him because their Kshatriya status was in question. Their honour too was threatened. Fraser advises him to explain his side completely to newspapers. People should know the circumstances, which led to the confiscation of the *watan* awarded to Rajopadhye. People should know that Rajopadhye was given repeated opportunities to explain his side, his justification was heard on more than one occasion, and that the decision was forced on him. Everyone should know that it all happened not because of any hatred of Brahmins but because of the irresponsible nature of Rajopadhye. Writes Fraser: "Give no ground for saying that you are vindictively punishing the Brahmins as a class."[22]

Shahu's reaction to Fraser's suggestion on taking a low-key stand is insightful. Self-respecting Shahu did not accept all the suggestions of Fraser. Mentioning the increasing opposition of Brahmins in his September 16, 1903 letter, Shahu writes: "I cannot certainly stop to their ways, nor is it possible now to give in. I was emboldened to take the step because I conscientiously believe that I am fighting for a true cause ... Brahmins are making fun of my administration, my caste and everything in their papers."[23]

Indeed, the Pune newspapers had fuel to the *Vedokta* fire. Shahu was hurt. He did not follow Fraser's advice of not to decide at that crucial moment on reservation of 50 per cent of the government services for the backward classes. But such differences of opinion did not come in the way of their strong bond of friendship.

Rajopadhye appealed to the Government of India against the Bomkbay Government's decision on Vedokta. Fraser was working as secretary in the foreign affairs department of Government of India between 1904 and 1906. The Government of Bombay Secretary C.H. Hill forwarded the appeal with his comments on March 3, 1905 to Fraser. He had written that Shahu's side was right in the *Vedokta* episode, Rajopadhye's appeal need not be considered; and in view of the history of the issue, the British government need not intervene in the matter.[24]

Hunting and Weddings

Shahu and Fraser were both hunting fans. They kept each other informed on their hunting expeditions, and describe thrilling events and accidents during hunting. Shahu had asked Fraser to send him some hunting dogs. He was interested in breeding horses. The two would invite each other for hunting expeditions. Some letters talk about children, their education and their weddings. Such letters make obvious the intimacy between the two families. Fraser asks Shahu in one letter to send the information he had collected on the *Varna* system in Hinduism for reference by an Englishman, who was writing a book on it. Shahu asked Prof. Dongre to collect authentic material on the subject. As the books written by Brahmins were silent on their own atrocities, Shahu asked Prof. Dongre to send all the information he had collected. Shahu writes to Fraser in a letter that the new information indicated that Brahmins in power committed more atrocities on other castes than the

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Mughals.[25]

Shahu writes in another letter of November 29, 1907, that he had to be bed-ridden for six months because of a serious wound sustained during hunting. Fraser was the Political Agent at Mysore at the time. He writes that he is going to see the Kaveri fall. He also wanted to find out how the small and big falls in Kolhapur principality could be put to some use. Fraser wanted to inspect the silk industry in Mysore. Shahu was experimenting on silk production. He always tried in his principality the successful experiments conducted elsewhere.[26]

Fraser's daughter got married at Secunderabad in November 1916. Shahu was not well and had decided that he would not go. He had informed accordingly. But Shahu was restless. How could he keep away from the wedding of the daughter of his guru? Shahu suddenly changed his plan, telegraphed Frazer accordingly on the day before the wedding. He reached Secunderabad in the morning of November 8 by a special train accompanied by his two sons. When they met, Shahu said to Fraser: "Please excuse me for such a sudden arrival. And don't worry about the arrangements for my stay. I will stay in the railway bogie." Shahu wished to present a gift to the bride. But Fraser said no, because it was not allowed by the rules. Shahu was unhappy. Earlier too, at the end of his Dharwad stay, he had wanted to present a gift to Fraser's wife; but Fraser had declined for the same reason. Shahu returned to Kolhapur after a two-day stay in Secunderabad.

Shahu and Social Transformation

After 1910, Shahu began his work in social transformation in ernest. He enacted many laws like compulsory primary education, discontinuing Kulkarni Watan, ban on untouchability and cooperation, all in the interest of the commoner. Gradually, Shahu's fame and work began to spread into the British areas outside his principality. He came into contact with many social and political movements outside his state. He began to be hailed as the only leader of the *Bahujan Samaj*. All this led to the founding of the non-Brahman party. India was to get limited rights of Swarajya after the World War. The concept of Home Rule was being discussed. Shahu honestly wanted to ensure that the interests of the *Bahujan Samaj* were not ignored in this transfer of authority. So he had to take part in the relevant movements outside his state. But being a vassal Shahu had to work within his limits. A misunderstanding over crossing of the limits by Shahu was always on the cards. The Brahmin newspapers worked to that end intentionally. At such a time, Shahu would open up with his guru and guide Fraser, who was quite understanding. Between 1910 and 1919, fewer letters were exchanged by Shahu and Fraser than between 1895 and 1910. But the correspondence never ceased. The occasions for seeking counsel declined but the letters inquiring about each other's well-being never stopped. Between 1910 and 1919, Fraser was on the move as Political Agent and Resident at Mysore, Hyderabad, Kashmir and back to Hyderabad.

There were riots at the time of army

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recruitment during the World War I at Kolhapur. There was misunderstanding between Shahu and Resident Wodhouse. Shahu was apprehensive lest the Ray situation was repeated. He wrote to Fraser on May 8,1917 about the situation in Kolhapur. Fraser had backed Shahu's efforts for an extension for Governor Lord Willingdon. Shahu's ideas on Home Rule too were accepted by Fraser. But he asks in the letter: "How many princes will agree to hand over the administration to ministers elected by the people?"

Fraser seems to be always keeping a watchful eye on Shahu's activity within and outside his principality. Although Fraser agreed in general with the decisions taken in favour of the non-Brahmin Community, he does not hesitate to communicate his views on some of Shahu's decisions. The Brahmin newspapers had charged that Shahu's reason for getting close to Arya Samaj was his anti-Brahmin attitude. Fraser writes about this on March 31,1920: "It is thousand pities that your efforts to raise the non-Brahmins should be interpreted as anti-Brahmin movement."

Shahu tried to get accepted a system of Communal Representation. He succeeded to some extent. Expressing his joy on this development, Fraser writes in his July 18, 1919 letter: "It is fortunate that this point of view, with which personally I have the fullest sympathy had found so weighty a spokesman as yourself in Western India."

Fraser's Historic Kolhapur Visit

Shahu's childhood friend, Bhavnagar's Maharaja Bhausinghji, died on July 13, 1919. Fraser wrote to Shahu expressing condolences. When he came to know that Fraser was soon to retire, Shahu wrote a touching letter to Fraser on August 9, 1919. He says, "I am deeply saddened to know that you are leaving India soon on retirement. Sir Claude Hill too is leaving soon. You two have been my Friend, Philosopher and Guide." Fraser was to retire after his long service in India on December 31, 1919. Before leaving India, he expressed the desire to visit Kolhapur and see for himself the progress achieved by his pupil and the new pro-people administrative system launched there. This is Fraser's historic visit, on February 3, 1920. Shahu, his brother Bapusaheb and the Queen received the Fraser family on Miraj station in a huge function. People and officers of the principality welcomed the Fraser family with band and flowers from Miraj to Kolhapur. There was an open felicitation ceremony in Kolhapur. Eleven educational organizations (hostels) presented a roll of honour to Fraser. In his welcome speech, Shahu said: "It is after a quarter of a century, Sir Stuart Fraser, that you have returned to Kolhapur and I welcome you most cordially. When I see Lady Fraser and yourself once more among us, happy recollections of the joyous time we had with you are brought back to me, and I feel as though that delightful period of boyhood had come back again..... It has given you an opportunity of seeing what fruit the pains you took with your pupil have borne. There is no doubt that Kolhapur has vastly changed since you saw it last. It is for you to judge in what direction the change has been. During all this time it has been my earnest wish and

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constant endeavour to do everything in my power to educate the masses, to inspire them with a higher standard of life, to root out superstition and with it the causes that have lead to the singularly artificial state of our society—the inequalities between man and man that we see on all sides. The task is not easy nor the work light. The inertia of ages has to be overcome, and the old order of things has to be changed out and out. What part I have played in bringing this about, at least partially, it is not for me to say. If I have succeeded in any small measure, the credit belongs to those who have heartily worked with me".

Fraser's reply ran thus :

"I little thought when my old friend the Maharaja invited me to pay a farewell visit to Kolhapur that I should find myself charged with the task of receiving and replying to a number of addresses from educational bodies in the presence of a great gathering of the people of the city.....

It is a commonplace to-day that the greatest need of India is better and wider spread of education, whether from the point of view of the moral and material uplift of the people, or (in British India) of their capacity to work successfully the reformed scheme of Government, which is now being introduced. None will deny this principle, but the special merit of His Highness the Chattrapati Maharaja, so it seems to me, is that for long years past he has made it his chief and personal aim in life to improve the condition of the masses, and, as a means to this end, has not only multiplied schools but has carried the gift of education to those classes which were too apathetic to seek of their own exertion the facilities provided for all alike without distinction of caste and creed. No Indian Prince has from the first displayed a more great-hearted sympathy with every class of his subjects, realizing that he is equally the father of the low caste and the high caste, of the Mahomedans and of the Indian Christians, as well as of the Hindus. And as a wise father recognizes a special duty towards the weak rather than the strong among his children, His Highness' policy has been specially to uplift the backward classes by encouraging them to share in the educational advantages enjoyed heretofore solely by their more favoured brethren. Agelong prejudices deep-rooted in the Indian social system make this a gigantic task and one which no individual can hope to complete in his lifetime. But with His Highness it has not been a case of mere aspirations for the future, and all that one Prince of courage, energy and determination to overcome difficulties could do, your Maharaja has done. To a Kolhapur audience it would be superfluous to repeat the many directions his activities have taken. To-day we are concerned only with one branch of his educational policy, the provision of hostels to enable poor students from the outlying villages to avail themselves of the superior schools in the capital, which would otherwise lie beyond their reach. Many of these hostels the Maharaja has taken me to see, and two days ago with characteristic thought-fulness for his old Guru, he invited-me to lay the foundation-stone of a new hostel for Mahomedans. To-day you have heard the testimony of no less than eleven branches of the community, which owe the creation of their hostels to the Chattrapati Maharaja's encouragement and liberality....

I cannot conclude with a better wish for your institutions than to hope they may

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assist in fulfilling His Highness object fo providing more that equality of opportunity for the individual, in whatever class of life he may be born, which underlies the Chattrapati Maharaja's truly democratic ideal for the State Providence has called upon him to rule."[37]

Shahu wanted to raise a memorial for his guru in Kolhapur. So he organised the foundation laying ceremony of Fraser Market in Shahupuri on February 3, 1920 in the presence of Fraser.

Fraser was to leave Bombay for London with his family on May 28, 1920. Naturally, Shahu decided to go to Bombay to see his guru off. On May 18,1920, he sent two pearl necklaces with his clerk Prabhawalkar for the wife and daughter of his guru as memoirs and requested Fraser to accept the presents. On two occasions, the ICS officer, meticulously following the ICS code, had declined such gifts. Shahu and old friends went to Bombay to see Fraser off. On the day of departure, the guru and the disciple had their last conversation. Fraser recounts that Shahu told him that he would participate in movements outside his principality to voice the problems of Dalits in society. No amount of bitter criticism by newspapers was going to stop Shahu from going ahead with his work.

Correspondence Continues

Shahu continued his programme of social reforms on a big scale. In February 1918, the Kulkarni Watans were confiscated; a step necessary to launch the *gram panchayat* system. But there was a big movement against it in the Bombay province. Brahmin newspapers held Shahu to the sword. Complaints to the British government, demonstrations and marches were common. Another *Vedokta*-like movement had begun against Shahu. Shahu wrote to Fraser from Rukdi Camp on May 27, 1920 to make his side clear. Shahu was under pressure not to participate in movements outside his principality. But now Shahu was the leader of the *Bahujan Samaj*. He felt that he could not ditch the community in the middle. Writes Shahu in the letter: "I have founded a party. Some newspapers have been launched with our help. I have to address meetings outside the principality to place our side before the people. If I stop all this today and get out of the *Bahujan Samaj* movement, the people in the movement will be upset. The very people had helped me greatly in my war efforts. They had helped the government. How can I abuse their confidence now? The government knows the vile conspiracies of Kulkarnis. Even if a vassal king, I am a human being first, I have to live with them. How can I forsake people who have helped me in my days of difficulties? Brahmins want to defame me and make it impossible for me to rule. If they don't succeed in that, they will kill me by throwing a bomb at me. I don't give public speeches unless they are necessary."

In a tone of frustration, Maharaja concludes "May God help me in retiring without any loss of reputation."

Fraser recalls that Shahu's last letter to him was about the visit of the Prince of Wales to Pune. Shahu organised this visit and made a success of it in spite of great difficulties. It was a period of unrest. The visit was boycotted. But Shahu made it a success through his own

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efforts. Within a few months of the visit, Shahu died an untimely death on May 6, 1922.

Frazer's Homage

Expressing grief at the death of his favourite pupil, Fraser writes:

"Thousands of his countrymen must have felt that with him they lost the light, which had begun to illuminate a world of new possibilities. His loss to India is indeed hard to overestimate, for as a social reformer he occupied a niche by himself among the Ruling Princes of India and the gap caused by his death is to be measured not only by what he achieved but by the magnitude of the work which still remains to be done. He kindred a torch in the Maratha Country, which others must and I believe, will hand on. Its light can never now be extinguished and his name will not be forgotten among the people he loved and served." [28]

Thus the Fraser-Shahu ties that began in May 1889 continued until Shahu's death in May 1922. Frazer remembered Shahu with pride long after his death.

Divine Friendship

Many facets of lifelong Shahu-Fraser friendship are remarkable. An ideal teacher-student relationship is finally transformed into friendship. An ideal teacher ultimately becomes a friend, philosopher and guide. It is easy being a teacher. Some have to become a teacher by accident. But a relationship begun as a guru rarely continues as a guardian throughout life. The relationship of most teachers with the disciples ends with the course. Gurus guiding their students throughout life are seen in the Indian tradition of *acharyas*. The real guru has to lead by hand and accompany the pupil wherever he goes.Fraser was a guru in this mould. He did not forsake his student in difficulties, be it the Vedokta episode or the poisoning case. Their friendship was ever-lasting. Actually the two were quite different persons. Frazer was a Westerner and Shahu an Easterner, one British, the other Indian. And as Rudyard Kipling says, the east and west will never meet. But Shahu-Frazer friendship went beyond race feelings. Shahu was a vassal king and Fraser an ICS officer of the British government. Self-respecting Shahu, as a heir to Shivaji's throne, wanted to maintain the honour of the throne while Frazer was in India to safeguard the interests of the British empire. There was often a conflict between the interests of the empire and those of Shahu. On such occasions, Frazer used to elevate the friendship to a noble level.

Truely, Fraser and Shahu were divine friends.

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19.

Rajarshi Shahu And Dr. Ambedkar - A Fond Relationship

Prof. Dhammapal Ratnakar
Scholar of Phule-Shahu-Ambedkar literature

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar worked as a professor in economics at the Sydneham College of Commerce, Mumbai, from November 11, 1918 to March 11, 1920. His job was not permanent. He was not interested in a permanent job then as he wanted to return to London to complete his unfinished studies. He needed funds for that. That was the reason why he had accepted the job. Babasaheb had then fully become aware of the pain and sufferings and problems of his untouchable brethren. But he had decided not to take up social work until he finished his education. But it was not possible for him.

Lord Southborough Committee visited India in 1919. Karmaveer Vitthal Ramji Shinde and Justice Narayan Chandavarkar were to appear before it on behalf of the untouchables. But both of them had no real idea of the problems of the untouchables and their life-sapping suffering. Fearing that the untouchables will lose their political rights because of the deposition of these two, Ambedkar, working at a government college, won an opportunity to represent the untouchables before the committee even at a risk to his job. He expressed his sincere anxiety about the lot of the untouchables during the deposition. It was the beginning of his social work.

In those days, apart from untouchables like Shivram Janba Kamble, there were hardly a few working sincerely for the untouchables. There was one exception: Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur.

From the time he assumed the reins of the principality on April 2, 1894 until his death, Shahu was active in all basic fields. The focus of his work was the human being. He wanted transformation in every field. He took the first major step for the upliftment of untouchables on July 26, 1902, by issuing an ordinance that reserved 50 per cent of the vacancies

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in the government service for the educationally backward candidates. Shau had taken the decision realising that both education and awareness were required if the untouchables were to achieve some progress. He sincerely felt the need of an awareness campaign among the untouchables. He wished the campaign to be led by someone from among the untouchables. If there was no such leadership among the untouchables at the moment, it should emerge soon, he felt. He has expressed his wish in a letter written to Sitaram Shivtarkar in September 1919. He writes: "We haven't met. But I agree with you. One who depends on others is lost. Know him to be the best, who struggles and strives. They should consider the views of myself, Maharaja of Baroda, Nizam of Hyderabad, Chandavarkar or Shinde. But they shouldn't be the leaders. The leader should be from among them."[1] In the person of Ambedkar, the new leadership had emerged from the untouchables and it had already started fighting for the rights of the untouchables.

The first meeting

An event of historic importance occurred in 1919. Shahu and Ambedkar met for the first time. There were some educated untouchable youths in the movement launched for them by Shahu in Kolhapur. One of them was Dattoba Santram Powar. He was a loyal associate of Shahu and was also in government service. He was acquainted with Ambedkar from 1917.[2] Dattoba Powar apprised Shahu at length about Ambedkar. When Shahu heard that there was a very-well educated youth from the untouchables, he was very happy. He expressed his desire to get acquainted with Ambedkar. The meeting took place in 1919.

When Shahu went to Mumbai in 1919, he stayed at Panhala Lodge. He had deployed some of his men to find out Ambedkar's address. But as they could not get it, he went himself to the Paral chawls where Ambedkar lived. When he got the message that Kolhapur Maharaja had come to see him, Ambedkar came down from his second storied residence. Thus Maharaja and Babasaheb met for the first time in a Paral chawl. Shahu was glad and he took young man with him to Panhala Lodge. They discussed various things there. Shahu invited Ambedkar to Kolhapur in the same meeting and the latter accepted it.[3]

Ambedkar's Kolhapur Visit

As agreed, Ambedkar came to Kolhapur. He stayed at the government rest house in front of the railway station (at that time). Shahu took him out in a procession through Kolhapur. Ambedkar was given a royal welcome and treatement. They dined together at the Sontali Camp. The two had prolonged discussions during this meeting.

Shahu organised a spectacular felicitation at the end of Ambedkar's visit and honoured him at a public function. Addressing the function, Ambedkar said: "The Chhatrapati has honoured me with headgear. I will always honour that sentiment."[4] Words full of deep meaning.

Assistance to *'Mooknayak'*

Ambedkar was ready to fight for his brethren in spite of the numerous difficulties he had faced while completing

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his education, the mentally unnerving humiliation in the Baroda principality and the burning pain of casteism he suffered himself. At the very beginning of his fight, he got the trusting and honest support of Shahu. This was a big relief. It helped Ambedkar get ready for the battle with vigour and hope.

By this time, Ambedkar had begun to feel the need for a newspaper for putting the untouchables' point of view before the people and the Southborough Committee then visiting India. Motivated by him, some untouchable social workers met Shahu in Mumbai and placed before him a plan for such a newspaper. Shahu immediately gave a cheque for Rs. 2,500 to launch it.[5] The *Mooknayak* fortnightly was thus born. Its inaugural issue was published on January 31, 1920. A young Mahar under-graduate from Vidarbha, Pandurang Nandram Bhatkar, was its editor. Ambedkar worked in government college and it was risky for him to be the editor of the paper. But he did most of the writing. The fortnightly was printed at Kashinath Raghunath Mitra's printing press at 14, Hararwala Building, Dr. Batliwala Road, Poybawdi, Paral. The first 13 editorials of the fortnightly were penned by Ambedkar. When he left for England, the responsibility rested with Bhatkar. *Mooknayak* was very effective in strengthening the movement of the untouchables.

The Mangaon Convention

As the ties between Shahu and Ambedkar became stronger the two represented firm ideological pillars for the movement of the untouchables. To give momentum to their cause, they were now obliged to strengthen their unity in order to create awareness among the people and make the movement more dynamic. This was what exactly happened. Mangaon Convention is one example.

The first convention of the South Maharashtra Dalit Parishad was organised at Mangaon in the Kagal region of the Kolhapur principality on March 20 and 21, 1920. It came to be known as the Mangaon Convention.

Dattoba Powar took the initiative in organising the convention. He discussed the idea with Shahu untouchable leaders Dr. Ramakant Kamble, Gangaram Kamble, Tukaram Ganachari, Shivram Kamble, Ramchandra Kamble, and Ningappa Eidale.[6] He wrote to Ambedkar to fix the convention. Eidale went to Mumbai to decide with Ambedkar the date and time for convention.[7]

Ambedkar arrived in Kolhapur with a couple of associates by train in the morning of March 20. He stayed at the guest-house of Shahu Maharaja (the present Shahupuri police station). After lunch he went by train to Rukdi and from there to Mangaon, about three kilometres away. The Mangaon patil and one of the convenors of the convention, Appasaheb Dadgonda, and hundreds of people welcomed him. People had already come to know that Shahu Maharaja too was to attend the convention. So thousands of people from the principality thronged the convention.

The convention began at 4 p.m. Babasaheb was elected as the president. Dattoba Powar and Ningappa Eiadale spoke at the beginning. Then Shahu arrived in a horse-drawn carriage.

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Bhaskarrao Jadhav, among others, accompanied him. Ambedkar welcomed the Chhatrapati and requested him to take a seat on the dais.[8]

Mangaon Convention was the first major public meeting in Ambedkar's life. His presence at the convention was a historic event. Shahu's address to the convention was a morale-booster not only for the untouchables but also Ambedkar himself. Beginning his address with generous praise of Ambedkar, Shahu said: "My dear friend Ambedkar is gracing the convention as its president. I have come here leaving my hunting aside specially to benefit by his speech. Mr. Ambedkar publishes *Mooknayak* fortnightly and deals with the problems of all the backward communities. I congratulate him heartily for that."

Shahu pointed out that he had stopped the practice of attendance *(Hazeri)* at the village *chawdi* by untouchables. "I wish to tell you in short why I decided to take that step. Because of attendance compulsion, village workers and other officials exploited them. If the rate of labour was four annas in the village, the officials would threaten them that they would be marked absent and force them to work without any remuneration. At the most, they would give them a pittance so that they would not starve. In this 20th century, this was the worse type of slavery. Those who had to give attendance could not rush to meet their guests and relatives if they fell ill. Often, relatives died without such workers being able to meet them. I have myself seen the death of small children as they had no one to look after because their parents were whisked away by force. When the parents returned, they found the children dead. Can there be any greater atrocity?"

About casteism, Shahu said: "There are no castes in any country except India. But in our country it is so strong that we treat our brothers and sisters worse than cats and dogs or even dung. Even now, we have undisciplined leaders. The poor keep dying at places like Ahmedabad and Amritsar or in Mumbai in riots that occurred some time back. We don't want leaders as empty prattlers . We want action-oriented leaders who will end casteism by their action and treat us like human beings."

Praising Ambedkar, Shahu said: "Why can't he be honoured with the title of Pandit? He is a gem of a scholar. Arya Samaj, Buddha Samaj and Christians will happily welcome him. But he is not going there to uplift you. You must thank him for that. And I do the same.

"I congratulate you for finding a leader of your own. I am sure Ambedkar won't rest without uplifting you. There will be a time when he will be the leader of entire India. In the end, I request Ambedkar to take the trouble of joining me for dinner at the Rajputwadi Camp before returning."[9]

The convention unanimously passed some resolutions. The resolution No. 2 was important: "The convention is of the opinion that the untouchables should celebrate the birthday of Shahu Maharaja as a festival because he has launched an upliftment campaign for them by giving them the right of equality."

The convention proposed and passed 15 resolutions. By resolution No. 3, it

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thanked other princes who were trying redemption of the untouchables.[10]

The Mangaon Convention was organised with great enthusiasm. It was not that the untouchables at Mangaon were not harassed because of the convention. They were. But there is no denying the fact that the presence together of Shahu and Ambedkar and their speeches did a lot to boost the morale of the untouchables. The convention was the beginning of public life for Ambedkar. And in the very beginning he had got a strong supporter such as Shahu Maharaja. That had further boosted his enthusiasm and morale. He had begun to nurture new hopes. The all-India Nagpur convention of untouchables, which was successfully organised later with Shahu Maharaja as president owes its success to some extent to the Mangaon Convention. Because Mangaon had created congenial atmosphere for it.

The Nagpur Convention

Ambedkar was trying his best to ensure that the political rights of the untouchables were not compromised. He had appeared before the Southborough Committee. But he was worried that the deposition by Karmaveer Shinde could influence the government decision to the detriment of the untouchables. Shinde had conveyed to the government that the representatives of untouchables should be selected by the members of the legislative council, not by the governor or the organizations of untouchables.

Realising that the untouchables will lose their political rights if the deposition by Shinde was accepted by the Southborough Committee, Ambedkar decided to launch a campaign to make people aware of how the Shinde's deposition was detrimental to the interests of the untouchables. To make a public declaration of the political ambitions of the untouchables, Ambedkar decided to organise a convention with Shahu as president. When G.A. Gawai, Keshavrao Khandare, Kalicharan Nanda Gawali went to Kolhapur to request Shahu to preside over the convention, the Maharaja asked them: "Why don't you request Lokmanya Tilak instead?" Gawai replied: "Not just Lokmanya, not even the avatar in Hindu dharma like Shriramchandra is in favour of upliftment of Dalits. His attitude with us seems against the religion. Please forgive us for being so frank. That's why, we are approaching you." Maharaja gave in. He said: "No matter if I lose my kingdom, I will do whatever is necessary for you." [11]

The first three-day convention of the Akhil Bharatiya Bahishkrut Samaj was organised with great enthusiasm at Nagpur under the presidentship of Shahu from May 30 to June 1 as planned. Pamphlets were distributed a day earlier to announce that Shahu Maharaja would arrive by Mumbai Mail on May 30. A big crowd gathered at the station to welcome Shahu in the morning. When he arrived at 9 a.m. a great welcome awaited him. The skies resounded to the welcome slogans for Shahu Maharaja. The convention began at 5 p.m. in a huge pandal erected on the Exhibition Grounds. The leaders present on the stage were Shahu Maharaja, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Sir Gangadhar Chitanvis, Shankarrao Chitanvis, Sir B.K. Bose,

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Baburao Yadav, Shripatrao Shinde, Dattoba Dalvi, R.S. Papanna, Shivram Janba Kamble, Krushnarao Kamble, Govind Gopal Kamble and G.A. Gawai. After the introductory speech by welcome committee chairman Babu Kalicharan, Shripatrao Shinde read out the speech of Shahu Maharaja. Shahu said in his speech:

"To use the word untouchable for any human being is condemnable. You are not untouchables. You are more intelligent, more courageous, more thoughtful and more self-sacrificing components of the Hindi nation than the people who hold you as untouchables. I don't think of you as untouchables. We have to begin working with the idea that we are all equal, with equal rights... Whether our country progresses quickly or slowly will depend upon the extent of eradication of casteism."

Shahu concluded: "You have treated me as one among you today. Love me the same way to the end. I too will not hesitate to do all I can to achieve your progress, ignoring all the difficulties that come in the way."[12]

Karmaveer Shinde had sent some of his associates to Nagpur to get the convention to endorse his views conveyed to the government on behalf of the untouchables. Ambedkar was furious because he felt these views as an insult to the untouchables. In his speech, he assailed Shinde's opinions. As a result, the convention passed a resolution opposing the Shinde policy. It requested the government not to act on the basis of the Shinde's deposition. Shripatrao Shinde too said in his speech that the government should not go by the Karmaveer Shinde's ideas. Shivram Janba Kambale and Shivtarkar too spoke at the convention.

Shahu Maharaja donated Rs. 5,000 as the fixed fund of the convention. Babu Kalicharan donated Rs. 1,000.[13] The concluding function of the convention was held on June 1 after introducing and passing some important resolutions. *Kesari* sharply criticised Shahu's speech at the convention in its June 8, 1920 issue. *Rajkaran* in its June 13, 1920 issue also lambasted Shahu's observations condemning casteism delivered at the foundation stone laying ceremony of Udaji Maratha Hostel on April 15, 1920.

Shahu was active in eradication of casteism. As a part of it, he financed a hotel opened in Kolhapur by Gangaram Kamble, an untouchable. Shahu himself hiself went there everyday with friends to have tea. Referring to it, *Rajkaran* had written: "Taking tea made by an untouchable should not be treated as an act of great courage. He said in his speech that he would renounce the throne, but is he going to choose a Mahar as his inheritor?"[14] The *Loksangrah* weekly went much beyond this and requested the government to probe the irregularities in the principality.[15] In short, the criticism by the Brahmin newspapers of Shahu's work to uplift the untouchables had become sharper and more vitriolic by the day.

One step ahead

The poisonous attacks on Shahu from all directions had increased because now he had fully dedicated himself to the cause of eradication of untouchability. Shahu was a fearless with unusual moral courage. He neither bowed down before

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such criticism nor was frustrated by it. On the contrary, he was now prepared to help the movement with all his might. He took one more active step. Ambedkar had written to him on June 4, 1920 of his plan to tour entire India to collect funds for the new organisation, Depressed Class Institute, launched by him. Shahu's reply shows his genuine noble feelings for the untouchables. He writes: "I gladly agree to the inclusion of my name in the deputation you are sending for collection of the funds. I am also ready to be the vice-president or secretary of whatever organization you set up for the purpose. I think we should set up an organisation of all India depressed classes education fund, select for it people with good reputation, and send them in on deputations on behalf of the organization so that fund collection becomes convenient. Personally, I wish to become the assistant secretary and will perform the work with pleasure."[16]

The letter shows the intimate relationship between Shahu and Ambedkar and also between Shahu and the untouchables' movement. In Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja, not only Ambedkar personally, but all the untouchables and their movement had found a strong, unwavering support. Ambedkar had decided to bring out a special issue of the fortnightly, *Mooknayak*, in Shahu's honour to acquaint the people with the yeomen services he had rendered to the vast masses, and partricularly to the untouchables, on the occasion of his birthday. He had sought more information on Shahu and since it wasnot forthcoming, he wrote to the Maharaja on June 13, 1920, informing that he was personally coming to Kolhapur to collect the information. He wrote, "June 26 is being celebrated everywhere as your birthday in accordance with the resolutions passed at the Mangaon and Nagpur conventions. We are bringing out a special issue of *Mooknayak*, aided by you, on the day. It will carry a photograph of His Royal Highness and the entire outline of all your great work. I had written to you seeking all this information. I regret that I have not got it as yet. The time is now short. So I have decided to come myself and collect the information. With that purpose, I am starting for Kolhapur this evening. I shall reach there by Tuesday evening. I am sure I will get to see you."[17]

It is not clear if this special issue was published or not. But the feeling of great respect, love and trust Ambedkar had for Shahu is quite clear.

Ambedkar could not tolerate the charges and attacks on Shahu made by the contemporary regressive Brahmin class. Through his editorial *Kakgarjana* in *Mooknayak* he not only refuted the allegations but also warned that it won't be any good if the same criticism is repeated. Writing in glowing terms about Shahu's work and achievements, he said: "None of the Brahmin brethren, who call themselves better because of their so called higher Varna, felt like inquiring about whether we had, like them, feelings of happiness and sorrow. If anyone did, he did not have the courage to tell so to the world. But how will they have the courage? For a person to have courage has to be fearless. The real Kshatriya is the real authority in this work. And thus, the real Kshatriya Shahu, with the brilliance of his

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soul that acts like the philosopher's stone, helped the untouchables to awaken from the slumber— in which they were kept by the so-called high castes for centuries— by bringing before the world the actual plight and emotions of the untouchables. Any wise non-Brahmin or untouchable person would regret the detestable criticism of the ordinances and policies of the Chhatrapati mouthed with the sole purpose of defeating the untouchable movement, by our Brahmin brethren.[18]

Mutual Consultations

There was a gap of 16 or 17 years in the age of these two great men. But the two never seem to have been aware of it. Shahu had taken into account Ambedkar's scholarship, his genuine feelings about the untouchables, not his age. And so he had addressed him as 'My dear friend Ambedkar' at the Mangaon convention. The untouchables had found in Maharaja a true friend. And Ambedkar too described Shahu as 'Friend of Untouchables.' The question is not who calls whom what but how close and intimate they were. The two had free discussions. They used to be always talking about how to bring about the all-round progress of the non-Brahman and untouchable sections of society. Shahu told Ambedkar at a 1920 meeting to write a small booklet in English to make the British rulers and the people aware of the non-Brahman movement. Ambedkar had replied: "I am shortly going to London for studies. I have no time to do it here. I will do it there."[19]

In May 1920, an untouchable person had applied to Shahu seeking help which Shahu forwarded to Ambedkar for his comments.[20]

Tilak had said at a public meeting around this time that Mahars were criminal people. Shahu wrote a letter to Ambedkar asking him to consult M/s Little and Company on whether any legal step could be possible in the context of the allegations of irregularities by the disciples of Tilak in the handling of the public fund. The letter ran thus :

Chhatrapati Kolhapur
Maharaja of Kolhapur 23rd June 1920

My Dear Dr. Ambedkar

Please consult Messrs Little and Co on two points. Firstly, the point that the Mahars were called a criminal tribe by Tilak. Can they proceed against him civilly? And secondly that the public funds are allegedly to be misappropriated by him or his party. Long accounts appeared in the *Sandesh* about them. From those accounts are the persons concerned liable to be proceeded with criminally and civilly or both?

Yours sincerely,
Shahu Chhatrapati.[21]

While replying the letter, Ambedkar informed the Maharaja that nothing important would come out from the exercise and on the contrary it would prove troublesome to them.[22]

It is clear from all these incidents that Shahu and Ambedkar did consult each other on many important issues. It can also be seen that the two had decided to apprise each other of all things and support the each other in all of them.

Ambedkar Goes to London

The movement for the rights of the

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untouchables was taking shape through the exchange of ideas between Shahu and Ambedkar and through their actions. Ambedkar did not ignore the movement, nor did he ignore his unfinished studies. He wished to return to London to complete his studies. So he quit his job as professor, which he had accepted for the sole purpose, and got ready to go to London. Shahu too was keen that he should go to London to pursue his studies. So he had requested the then police commissioner at Mumbai, Griffith, to issue a permit to Dr. Ambedkar to enable him to go abroad at the earliest.[23] Shahu had helped Babasaheb financially too. He had even written to his friend in London, Sir Alfred Peace, introducing Ambedkar and requesting him to help. Shahu wrote:

"This is to introduce to you my friend Dr. Ambedkar who belongs to one of the untouchable communities, namely the Mahars. He is a Ph.D. of the Columbia University, New York, and has been a Professor at Sydneham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. He is coming to England for study at the London School of Economics and at the Inns Court. He will explain to you the difference between the Backward Classes and the Brahmin bureaucracy. Also he will tell you what sufferings one, who tries to sympathise, has to undergo at the hands of bureaucratic Brahmins who claim to have been a democratic people. He intends to lay before the enlightened public of England. the view point of non-Brahmin Hindus who are unanimous in the opinion that in asking for Home Rule the real object of Brahmins has been to regain and establish their long lost power. The present scheme and Self Government for Indians will not make the people free and equal but will only make the Brahmins powerful. A Brahmin Oligarchy, possessed of political power, will be a menace to the Empire and a drag on the onward march of the Indian people. The non-Brahmins have failed to get a hearing from the several administrations in India but they hope to find sympathy at the hands of the British Public. May I, therefore, request you to give Dr. Ambedkar a patient hearing and such help as you can conveniently render?"[24]

Shahu was worried of difficulties confronting Ambedkar in London. This seems to be the main intention behind this letter. As decided, Babasaheb left Mumbai for London on July 5, 1920.

Shahu's Work For Untouchables

Even when Ambedkar was in England, Shahu's untouchability eradication movement continued. He had already taken some revolutionary decisions to free untouchables from slavery and to ensure their all-round progress. September 18, 1918 must be viewed as an epoch-making day in the history of the untouchables, especially Mahars. That day, Chhatrapati Shahu ended the system of Mahar *watan*. He let the watan land remain with Mahars but they were no more bonded servants of the village. They became a free citizens like others. The work being done by Mahars was now to be done by workers appointed by the government on salary. That meant more burden on the treasury. Officials brought this danger to the notice of Shahu. He had replied: "I don't care even if the treasury is completely emptied. But I want

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to end the tradition that denies humanness to human beings.[25]

From July 27, 1918, Shahu freed Mahar, Mang, Ramoshi and Berad communities from the oppressive system of compulsory roll-call. On August 8 and 10, 1918, he issued two orders giving priority to untouchables in the appointment of talathis. He also said, if a man with necessary merit was found, an untouchable should even be appointed the chief officer. Maharaja took many decisions, issued many orders and implemented them to free untouchables completely. He made provisions for legal action against those violating the orders. While doing all this, he did never bother about his throne. He did not allow the movement of the untouchables in Maharashtra to wither away after Ambedkar left for London. On the contrary, he gave momentum to it. He also kept on reminding people Ambedkar's importance, his work, and his genuine feeling for the untouchables. He ensured the influence of Ambedkar on the people would not wane. Shahu's speech at the Delhi Convention is worth noting on this count. It was the third convention of the All India Council of Untouchables which was held in Delhi on February 16, 1922. Shahu said in presidential address: "The honour of becoming your president and addressing you in that capacity belongs to Ambedkar. Ambedkar is proud to say that he is one from amongst you. He is more learned than me. Unfortunately, he cannot attend the convention as he is in London at the moment. But, I am sure, wherever he is, the plight of the untouchables is always pricking his heart."[26] Shahu said in conclusion: "You should keep the ideal of your leader, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, before you and try to become like him. I am your slave. I am your servant. Get all your work done through me."[27]

A king with gentle humility, genuine empathy for the untouchables, transperency of heart and a braod mind to openly praise qualities of a friend – all these endearing characteristics of Shahu magnificently come out in this reat speech.

Ambedkar's Work in England

Besides pursuing his studies in England, Ambedkar deployed all his energies and skills to explain to the British people, the bureaucrats and the politicians, the significance of the non-Brahmin movement in India and the complex social situation in which the movement was advancing a progressive cause. In a letter to Shahu on February 3, 1921, he writes : "Montagu goes by the advice of the moderate leaders. But I am sure he won't talk disparagingly of the non-Brahman movement. Factually speaking, not many here are bothered about making any efforts to understand the non-Brahmin movement. When the reforms bill was being drafted there was no capable leader here to convince them about the importance of the non-Brahmin movement. This is a regrettable fact. That made it easy for the opponents to say that it was against Brahmans. The pro-democracy side of the movement was cunningly kept in the dark. It was distorted. And this distorted form is what the British mind remembers now.

"Now that the draft of the political reforms plan has been finalized, no one is ready to take the trouble of knowing how much discrimination exists in India.

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Still, we have to start preparing for the future. That's why, whenever I get a chance, I convey to every Englishman of consequence how the complex social and political issues in India are intertwined with each other. But my efforts are after the incident has occurred. So its effects will not be seen soon. But whether they are useless, only time will tell. According to your direction, I have discussed with some influential people the possibility of establishing an institute here. They have all unanimously supported the idea. But in their view, unless the institute has a paid secretary, it will not last. That means, the annual expenditure will be a minimum of 500 pounds. Such an institute will sure prove beneficial for the untouchables. But I am sure the expenditure needed is beyond us."

He writes at the end: "I am not interested in personal fame. And even if I miss this opportunity to serve my people, Maharaja will realize that I am preparing myself better for serving the people on a larger scale. I have befriended the editor of London Times. I am sending herewith the cutting of an article by him on education of the untouchables written on the basis of information given by me."[28]

Being busy in two or three types of work, Ambedkar had declined the request of Minister for India Montagu to return to Mumbai to be a member of the legislative council.[29]

Just as the non-Brahmin and untouchables movements needed Shahu and Ambedkar, the two needed each other. Their relationship was not limited to being associates in movements. An intimate bond of kinship, respect, need and love had developed between the two. This can be felt from their correspondence. The two had tremendous faith in each other. And both always understood each other.

In a letter on September 4, 1921 seeking financial help from Shahu, Ambedkar writes : "We need you ever so much for you are the pillar of that great movement towards social democracy which is making its headway in India"[30]

Shahu's Death

Shahu was the pillar of untouchables and non-Brahmin movements. Unfortunately, the pillar did not last long. His health kept on deteriorating. Shahu passed away in Mumbai on May 6, 1922. This was a shock to the non-Brahmin and untouchables movements and particularly to Ambedkar who was in London at that moment. As soon as he received the shocking news, he wrote to Rajaram Maharaj on May 10, 1922: "The news of the death of His Highness which I read in the newspapers came to me as a shock. I am doubly grieved by the calamitous event. In his death I have lost the personal friend and the deperssed classes have lost a great benefactor and the greatest champion of their cause."[31] After returning to India from London, Ambedkar personally went to Kolhapur to meet Rajaram Maharaja and Dowager Maharanisaheb to share their grief.

Ambedkar Praises Shahu

Ambedkar's real public life began after he returned to India on completing his studies. But now he did not have the "great defender of the untouchables" or the friend who would do everything to

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give him company. Ambedkar later gave momentum to the movement of social equality that Shahu had visualised. He spent his life over it. He took up and followed up the issues and schemes planned by Shahu, his revolutionary decisions taken for his principality at the social and government level. The Mahar Watan Bill is an example of the result of his efforts. Ambedkar explains the relation of Shahu with the Mahar Watan Bill in the November 4, 1927 issue of his fortnightly, *Bahishkrut Bharat*. Writes Ambedkar: "The late Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja was no enemy of Mahars. The untouchables never had a friend like him and we doubt if they will ever get one like him in future. But he had fully realised that the downslide of Mahars was caused by the *watans*. That's why he had ended the system in Kolhapur principality using his own powers."[32]

Many concepts about social democracy mooted by Shahu were later included in the Constitution by Ambedkar. And whenever needed and whenever there was an opportunity, he proudly referred to Shahu's work in glowing terms. He always publicly acknowledged Shahu's personal help to him and the debt he owed to Shahu. Delivering the presidential address at the meeting of the Dalit Praja Parishad in Kolhapur on January 13, 1940, Ambedkar said: "One thing about Kolhapur is certain. And I and untouchables are proud of Kolhapur for that. Shahu Maharaja sowed the real seeds of democracy in Kolhapur. We celebrate the birth anniversary of Gobrahman-pratipalak Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja. Shivaji Maharaja could not destroy Brahminism. He had to bring Gaga Bhatta from Kashi by giving gold for his coronation. It must be said that Shahu Chhatrapati was greater than Shivaji in so far as breaking the sting of Brahminism. May be Shahu Maharaja had some faults. But is there a king without one? There is no point in focusing only on faults. Our society cannot achieve progress without destroying Brahminism. The greatness of Shahu is that he made a brave effort to destroy it. He did all he could to eliminate inequality in society. He destroyed the bastion of Brahminism. This is no small achievement. I must record here that my public life began at the Mangaon Convention presided over by Shahu Maharaja. I will always be indebted to him for the Rs. 2500 given for the propagation of the idea that is dear to both of us equality."[33]

Fond Relationship

This was the kind of relationship between Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Both were extra-ordinary persons. The system had put its stamp of caste and religion over the two. But the two great men had gone beyond these. Shahu the king of a principality; and Ambedkar born 'untouchable'! Ambedkar's academic credentials and scholarship were extraordinary. The caste still was an obstacle for such a man. Having suffered casteism since childhood, he knew by experience the problems, sufferings and unhappiness of his brethren. And he spent all his life fighting for a better deal for them.

Shahu was a Kshatriya. On taking over the reins, he brought about fundamental changes in his kingdom.

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Brahmin hegemony was much too apparent in Kolhapur in every field when he surveyed the scene. In that minefiled of casteism, Shahu took bold administrative decisions to bring about some social equilibrium. That involved appointment of non-Brahman officers. He involved people of all other castes to break the oppressive Brahmin hegemony. He cared more for the people than his kingdom. That was why he began to struggle for the freedom of untouchables although he had no personal reason to do so. A king giving more importance to the people than the kingdom was a historic event of the century. The untouchable is also a human being. Then why is he kept away from others? Why isolated from human beings? Why these killing restrictions only on him? Why the slavery? These questions troubled Shahu. And so he set about launching a movement to bring human dignity back to the untouchables, to bring them complete freedom.

Actually, Shahu had launched the movement for freeing the untouchables. He should have led it. But he was convinced that if untouchables were to progress, they must throw up a leader from amongst themselves. Explaining this view in simple words, he said: "Even animals do not accept a leader from other species. Why should then men do that? A herd of deer is not led by a pig. Nor that of pigs by a deer. A flock of pigeons is not led by a duck. Nor that of ducks by a crow. Then why human communities be led by other castes. We should have a leader from our own caste, whatever his limitations."[34]

This argument was an invitation for social introspecion. The simplicity hides his subtle thinking process. And then, of course, the untouchables got their own dynamic, young leader in Dr. Ambedkar, a leader from their caste to break the established oppressive social system and remould it on the foundation of equality, to transform the dream of Shahu into reality. The movement of untouchables launched by Shahu was later carried forward and led by Ambedkar. Unfortunately, when Ambedkar returned from England to plunge into the social maelstorm Shahu was no more. Had he lived a few more years, the movement of untouchables might have looked a bit different. But Ambedkar did not stop. He spent his life in the service of untouchables on the lines visualized by Shahu. And while doing so, he always acknowledged with gratidude the debt he owed to Maharaja.

Just like Shahu did for Ambedkar, the latter too kept alive Shahu's ideals and deeds and took care to keep Shahu's shining memory alive. Truely, an unbreakable bond of affection between the two great men of our era.

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20

Shahu : Economic Ideas and Policies

Comrade Govind Pansare
social activist

Rajarshi Shahu's image in society is that of a social reformer, and correctly so. However, this has overshadowed his progressive outlook in other areas. It is natural that a reformist or a progressive in one sphere should have similar reformist approach in other areas also. History, of course, has seen leaders who were progressive in one way, but were not so in other spheres. They might have their own reasonable justification for being so. But it is not fair to judge a person's progressiveness solely on his actions in one field. It is better to see the person's approach in totality.

Too much has been said about Shahu's position on Swarajya, and more the discussion on the issue, the better. Views and counter-views are always welcome. Not allowing such discussions is harmful. Several people took peculiar interest in discussing Shahu's private life. Of course, it only goes to show their tastes and calibre.

However, Shahu's economic policy and his economic thoughts have not been discussed adequately. Some of his biographers earlier, and even in recent times, have touched the subject partially.Two research books, presenting in depth the economic aspect of Shahu's policies, were published in 1975. They are quite useful to researchers. One, titled *Shri Shahu Chhatrapatinche Arthkaran,* is written by Prof. Meena Kulkarni and Prof. B.S. Kulkarni. The other, titled *Chhatrapati Shahunche Samajvadi Arthik Dhoran,* is written by Dr. V.B. Ghuge. More discussion and writing are needed on the subject.

Shahu's Period

While evaluating a person or an event, it is important to take into consideration the period concerned. Otherwise, if a person from the period of 1915 is judged on the yardsticks of 1998, it will give a distorted picture. Several experts ignore this basic principle of evaluation, and

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hence make a distorted presentation. Many have committed the same mistake while viewing Shahu's position on Swarajya. Some have taken recourse to absolute lies and mischief-mongering.

Shahu Maharaja was born on June 26, 1874. On March 17, 1884, when he was barely 10 years old, he ascended to the Kolhapur throne as the adopted son. On April 2,1894, he actually took the reins in his hands. He passed away on May 6, 1922 in Mumbai. He ruled for a total of 28 years.

The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. Dadabhai Naoroji had presented an in-depth study on Indian poverty discussing the correlation between swarajya and poverty. What was the role of Mahatma Gandhi, who was yet to get the honour of 'Mahatma' or the "father of the nation' then? Gandhi wrote in the *Young India* issue of January 3,1922: "It would be illegal to insist on total freedom at this juncture. It would unnecessarily generate hatred. And it would amount to denying the existence of God."

Yet another great leader of Indian freedom struggle, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, had refused to link him with the "total freedom" resolution of 1921. During the 1921 National Congress covention at Ahmedabad, Hazrat Mohani had demanded through a resolution that "we declare that total freedom was our goal." While Gandhi opposed the resolution, Pandit Nehru also refused to be a party to it. But just because both these leaders took this stand on Swarajya then, they can't be labelled as detractors of Swarajya. Their view has to be looked at in the right perspective.

The Scene Elsewhere

Barring a few princely states like Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, and Baroda, other princely states cared little for their subjects. They behaved as if the subjects were in their service. They had a lavish lifestyle and squandered away money. They always tried to please the British, since they did not want to invite the rulers' wrath. Their's was a slavish life without any self-respect.

The British were not interested in doing any good for the Indian people. Their policy and programme was to exploit India. Russia witnessed a labour revolution at the end of 1917. The new Soviet Union was busy resisting attacks from imperialist nations and was engaged in protecting the workers' rule. The new policy protecting the interests of the working class and farmers was yet to be implemented there, and the world was still to feel its impact. But barring this exception, what was the position of other world rulers?

Their philosophy was that only defence and the maintenance of internal law and order situation was the responsibility of rulers, and that the government should not interfere in economic affairs. They advocated that the government should only collect taxes and spend on defence and law and order. Other economic affairs should be left to people themselves.The paramount concept was that it was not the responsibility of a government to make people happy, or to help them achieve progress, or to make them wise, or to remove economic disparities.

"Free economy" and "open

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competition" were the overriding principles of economic policy. The fittest will survive, and the weak will perish, or rather should perish, was the prevalent economic principle.

We should view Rajarshi Shahu's economic policy against this backdrop.

Real Situation

Here, we must take into consideration some relevant points. How was the land that Shahu ruled? How were the people? What were their capabilities? What were the limitations of the land and the people there?

Shahu's state spread over a little more than the present Kolhapur district. The total area under his rule was 3217 square miles, as against Kolhapur's district's area of 3188 square miles. The Katkol and Raibag regions, now in Karnataka, were part of Shahu's kingdom then. The population was between 8.5 lakh and 9 lakh. The literacy level was 2.8 per cent in 1893-94. It went up to 4.4 per cent in 1921-22.

Farming

Farming was the main occupation. The land under agriculture was 12,94,116 acres in 1893-94. It went up to 14,26,535 acres in 1921-22. Just about a little more than a 10 per cent rise.

A peculiarity of the land holdings was that people had small plots of land. Shahu was of the opinion that farmers should possess bigger plots, because small farms did not generate adequate yield and farmers unnecessarily faced losses. Shahu had addressed a Mahar community covention at Mangon on March 22, 1920. He told the gathering: "You share your land in such a way that each one shall have 10 acres. The income generated should be handed over to the elderly person amongst you. That would spare you starvation."

In 1913, he made a law whereby all Inam land grants were made indivisible. They could not be divided. Kshatriyas then considered farming below their dignity. Shahu said once: "Farming actually is doubly beneficial. It makes an individual prosperous, and it is also in the interest of mankind. Farming is not demeaning at all for a Kshatriya. Persons performing any work that leads to man's progress and overall well-being of society cannot be considered lowly or Shudra." This clearly shows his idea about dignity of labour.

Irrigation

The Kolhapur principality was drought-prone even in Shahu's period, like several other areas in Maharashtra. His emphasis was on helping the drought-hit. He was fully aware that adequate water supply to agriculture was the correct way to ending the drought situation. There were rivers, wells and tanks in the principality. A report of 1915-16 shows that while rivers provided water to 39,783 acres, wells and tanks irrigated 39,845 acres and 232 acres respectively, covering a total of 79,860 acres of land. Shahu encouraged and funded construction of bunds and tanks.

Radhanagri Dam

The Radhanagari dam scheme, planned and executed by Shahu with limited financial and technical resources, bears testimony to his ambition and vision. The preliminary planning of the

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dam began in 1907. The actual work started in November 1909. Maharani Laxmibai, after whom the reservoir was named, launched the work. The construction faced several problems. There was money crunch. Doubts were expressed about the durability of the construction. The work had to be stopped on many occasions due to several constraints, but Shahu persisted with it. The dam unfortunately could not be completed in his lifetime, although much of the work was done. It was completed in Rajaram Maharaja's tenure. A power generation station was set up afterwards.

Shahu Maharaja, thus, was the pioneer of the green revolution in Kolhapur. The sustained agricultural growth of the region is a legacy of Shahu. Such a visionary attitude was rarely found among the contemporary rulers. That is why Shahu is considered a great ruler.

Experiments and Research

Shahu had realised the need for new farm implements for improving agriculture. He said once: "..... Improvement in agriculture is vital for the welfare of any nation. The average agricultural production in our country is far less compared to other countries. Newer equipments are required for the purpose....."

A separate agricultural institute was established in 1912 in Kolhapur. A museum of modern agricultural instruments was also opened. These were given to farmers for carrying out experiments. What is more, a demonstrator was specially appointed by Shahu to show the farmers how to carry out new experiments.

Exhibitions of agriculture and animals were regularly held. Competitions were held and prizes distributed. Experiments were conducted on ideal farming. Whatever was possible was done for improvement in agriculture. Thus, the seeds of post-independence agricultural experiments were actually sown during Shahu's regime.

Crop Pattern

Shahu encouraged cultivation of a variety of crops. Tea and coffee were planted at Panhala and Bhudargad. Plantations of cocoa, cardmom, rubber, jute, potato, ambadi, Cambodian cotton, were also undertaken in the same region. Gardens were developed through nurseries, experiments carried out in fertilisers.

Plantation of *hirda, jambhul, jute,* cashew, mango, teak, jackfruit was funded. Whether these experiments delivered any fruits is disputable, but they show the enterprising and innovative nature of Shahu. And today's farmer in Kolhapur district carries forward the same legacy.

Shahu had also thought about subsidiary farming activities such as animal breeding, poultry and duck farming, and dairy products.

Shahu And Co-operatives

Kolhapur is a leading district in the cooperative field today. Its beginning can also be traced to Shahu's period. A co-operative law was enacted in 1912. The Urban Co-operative Bank and the Balbhim Co-operative Bank were established in his time. There were a total of 37 co-operative societies in 1920-21.

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Here is an excerpt from one of Shahu's speeches. "Several people should combine their skills, intellect, money, and physical labour. They should co-operate with each other. Earlier, one family used to work at one place and the profit was shared by just single family. The definition of a family will have to be extended now. As many as 10, 20, or 25 families should come together to do business. Start co-operative factories, or credit societies, or even co-operative shops."

Kolhapur district's present financial and overall progress, thus, has its seeds in Shahu's actions and thoughts.

Business Activities

Shahu's policy on trade and business activities clearly reflects his economic approach. A predominant thought in the period was that opening and running industries was not the responsibility of a king. The British had also adopted the same policy. Encouraging industries was never their priority. In such a situation, Shahu's thoughts on the issue are really significant. See the following extract from his speech. "Economic prosperity depends on industrialisation. People should come together to implement the system of co-operative factories, societies, and marketing. The Kolhapur principality will provide all help for the purpose." It is significant to note here Shahu's emphasis on co-operation and his readiness to provide help.

See another excerpt. "....Capitalism and monopoly in industries is not right, and workers being fully dependent on them is not fair. The system is not suited to India." It is really remarkable that a prince, who always had to work under the pressure of British rulers, speaks his mind in such a manner, and that too way back in the second decade of the 20th century. It clearly shows Shahu's progressive attitude.

Here is yet another excerpt from his speech. "Centralisation of industries in urban areas leads to influx of rural people to cities, and that in turn creates adverse financial and social implications. Decentralisation is essential to avoid this."

Shahu's ideas actually proved to be guiding principles for India's economic policy in the 21st century.

Actions Match Policies

Shahu is correctly known as an "active' reformer and not the one who indulged in just tall talk. Some traders in the principality established a joint stock company in 1905 and started a weaving mill. Shahu invested a large sum in its share capital. He made available land and water supply free of cost. Shahu laid its foundation and it was named after him. The mill is known as Shahu Mill. The production started in 1910-11. The ownership went to the principality owing to some internal differences in 1915-16. The mill later started manufacturing cloth. A ginning factory was opened in Ichalkaranji in 1908-09. The number went up to six by 1912-13, at Kolhapur, Shirol, Chinchli and Gadhinglaj. All these factories received help from Shahu.

The Shahu Weavers' Association was formed at Raibag in 1912-13. Several weavers and workers, who had shifted to other places after failure in business, were brought together. There were about 160 men and women members of the

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association. Shahu provided them interest-free loans, shelter, as also some land. Sarees, dhotis, and bed-sheets were manufactured there. And Shahu had promised them an assured demand from the durbar for their products.

It is difficult to find another prince in India who cared so much for his people and helped them become independent. Several oil mills, paint factories, and other industries were started during his regime. When Shahu came to power in 1894, there was not a single industry worth the name. Trade and industry, however, really flourished by the end of his regime. His economic policy gave a boost to employment, production, and prosperity. He was keen that everybody benefit by the progress, and that the ruler should actively participate in this development.

Roads And Railways

Communication network, especially roads and railways, is key to industrial growth (of any region). It is essential even for social transactions. Roads were inadequate in the principality when Shahu ascended to the throne. He concentrated on road construction, and completed 185 miles of new roads. The expenses were born by the durbar.

Earlier, there were 72.4 miles of roads per 1000 square miles in Kolhapur principality. The length had gone up to 129.9 miles per 1000 square miles, by 1922 when Shahu died. Villages were connected to towns. Goods produced in villages got market and reasonable prices in cities. In turn, the urban products, useful for farming or household purposes, were sold in villages. Such trading gave rise to social interaction.

The Indian railways was in the hands of private owners for long. However, the railway in Kolhapur principality was launched in the public sector. Shahu launched in 1888 the work on linking Kolhapur City to Miraj railway junction. It was completed in 1891. Expenses were again born by the government. Total investment in railways stood at Rs 23.26 lakh at the end of 1906.

Shahu was aware of the direct connection between means of transport and development (of a particular region). Hence he took it up on priority basis. A Kolhapur-Nipani-Raibag rail line was planned. However, it had to be shelved, as the work on Radhanagri dam was hit by shortage of funds. Shahu knew his priorities well. Railway lines were no doubt important, but dam was more important in view of agricultural development.

Trade

Shahu was instrumental in giving a boost to trade, because he believed it would lead to economic growth. Trade in goods manufactured in factories or industries was no problem, but something had to be done for marketing agricultural produce. He took the initiative in opening the market center at Kolhapur. Nipani then was the major trading hub. Shahu invited traders of Nipani at Kagal and discussed with them the setting up of a market place at Kolhapur. He offered them several incentives and concessions to open trading firms at Kolhapur.

The Shahupuri Trading Centre was thus established in 1895. Traders were offered large plots of land free of cost here, apart from several tax concessions.

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The trading center then was far from the main city, and close to the railway station, and rightly so. The postal department was requested to make available post and telegraph facilities near the trading center.

Shahu further encouraged trading at Jaysingpur and Gadhinglaj, to avoid centralisation. As a result, Jaysingpur became the market place for tobacco, while Gadhinglaj became a trading center for jaggery, chilly, and groundnut. Kolhapur is known for its jaggery market. The Kolhapur jaggery is famous all over the country. Earlier, Rajapur in Konkan was the major jaggery center. Jaggery was produced in the Kolhapur region, but traded in Rajapur. Thanks to Shahu, Kolhapur also became an important trading center of jaggery.

All these efforts naturally showed positive results, by way of rise in agricultural exports. From Rs. 6 lakh in 1894-95, the exports went up to Rs. 30 lakh by 1921. The rise was almost five times. No other prince had taken so much effort for growth in trade.

Drought-eradication Schemes

The Kolhapur region experienced occasional droughts, like other parts of the country. Droughts hit the principality thrice in Shahu's regime - in 1896-97, 1899-1900, and in 1918-19. Alte, Shirol, and Raibag areas were badly affected. Shahu took measures to cope with the drought like providing loans, giving jobs on daily wages, providing food grains at reasonable prices, taking care of cattle, making available fodder, and allowing grazing on government land. Bhaskarrao Jadhav was specially appointed as drought commissioner, apart from other officials.

Shahu also initiated long-term measures, such as construction of dams, tanks, and wells, to tide over droughts.

Workers and Shahu

The modern labour movement was yet to take roots in Shahu's period. It had just begun. He had addressed a workers' rally on November 10, 1918 at Parel in Mumbai. Again, on November 24, 1918, he gave a speech at the inauguration of 'People's Union' in Mumbai.

In both these speeches, Shahu exhorted workers to organise themselves in unions . "....It is not fair that lives of thousands of people should be dependent on the whims and selfishness of capitalists," he said, citing examples of labour unions in Europe and Russia.

Shahu was a prince. The period was before 1922, and the British ruled the country then. Kolhapur was a small principality, having limited economic capacity. In general, the atmosphere was conservative. In such a situation, Shahu's progressive outlook and actions come as a pleasant surprise.

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21

Radhanagari Dam : A Boon For Kolhapur

Meena Kulkarni
Professor of Economics

"I am delighted to say that a great scheme of irrigation which you propose to undertake testifies to your real desire to improve the productivity of the soil and give greater prosperity to your people."

- (Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, in a speech delivered in Kolhapur on 25-11-1913.)

Economic Progress and Agricultural Development

The process of economic progress of any country is linked to the development of agro-industry and service sectors. The main goal of all economic effort has been to raise the standard of living of citizens and to lower economic disparities. Almost all the nations accepted the concept of a welfare state in the 20th century. There is unanimity over the need to concentrate on realistic investment, and to put the common man at the center of the country's affairs. It was, however, difficult to achieve this in a poor, developing, and agro-based country like India, especially in adverse conditions of the pre-independence period. But there were a few princely states which tried to work towards these goals and Rajarshi Shahu's Kolhapur principality was one among them.

Shahu had set several goals for his subjects. People were illiterate, poor, backward, and casteist. Shahu's efforts were directed at awakening the common man, making him aware of his strengths, raising his living standard, making him available facilities for education, and supporting him to start trade and business. His economic concepts were backed by solid action. He used his power and resources for the welfare of the people. Shahu's achievements in various fields such as agriculture, co-operatives, trade, business, transport, communication, education, health, labour, and human investment was really unprecedented in India. His singular goal was the social, economic, cultural, educational and intellectual progress of the common man. He made all-out efforts for agricultural development fighting against natural as also man-made

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difficulties. Over 80 per cent population in the then British India depended on agriculture for its livelihood. In the Kolhapur princely state, almost the entire population lived off agriculture. Shahu was aware that the farmer in India was poor, ignorant, used conventional farming methods, and faced shortage of funds. The productivity as compared to other nations was low. There was no organisation to sell the agricultural produce. Shahu had said in several of his speeches that agricultural development was essential for the country's development and that the lot of common farmer would have to be improved to reduce rural poverty. Towards this end, he initiated a number of steps such as agro-research, experiments in cultivation, modernisation of farming, supplementary activities, promotion of co-operative ventures, irrigation, and the King Edward Agricultural Institute. The principality faced drought on many occasions. Several measures, including construction of new tanks and repair of old ones, were undertaken to provide drinking water to people, and irrigation of farms. But along with these smaller schemes, Shahu planned and executed the long-term Radhanagari dam scheme, which has proved to be a befitting memorial to the prince.

Planning

The idea of such a dam occurred to him when he was on a tour of England in 1902. He would say that the British used their resources very carefully and thoughtfully and that it was worth emulation by Indians. The hilly terrain received abundant rain, but since the water was not blocked, it flowed away into the sea through rivers. The rich land remained dry. Shahu felt sorry that water resources in his country were not exploited properly. All along, he was meditating on it. A few scattered efforts like digging small tanks and wells and repair of existing tanks were undertaken to meet the drought situation. On his return from England, Shahu issued a notification on 3-2-1902, announcing an irrigation policy for the Kolhapur principality. A separate irrigation section was created in the public works department. Shankar Sitaram Gupte was appointed as irrigation officer. He was entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out a detailed survey of irrigation facilities available in villages. A plan was chalked out to provide water to every village for farming, through government tanks and private wells. Additional staff was appointed for the irrigation department to quicken the process of survey. A grant of Rs. 600 was sanctioned for the necessary material and equipment. The revenue officer in each taluka was asked to provide information to the irrigation officer. Officers were asked to submit reports about possible irrigation projects. The executive engineer of Kolhapur state, D.A. Vichare, had suggested a scheme. Accordingly, two dams were mooted - on the Bhogavati river near Fejivade, and on the Dudhganga river in Bhudargad taluka. A survey was carried out. After much deliberation, Shahu decided to construct a dam on the Bhogavati river, 30 miles west of Kolhapur at Fejivade, in 1907. It brought about a complete change in the agriculture in Kolhapur district, and ushered in the first green revolution in Maharashtra.

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Shahu's Involvement

Once the decision on the Radhanagari dam was taken, Shahu got fully involved in it. All along, he worried over it. He says in one of his letters : "My life's work will have been done when I complete this project." The completion of the dam became his life's mission. He took every possible step within his power to facilitate the dam construction. He deliberated from time to time with the then Governor of Bombay State, the governor's advisory board, the public works department of Bombay State and its engineers. Some changes were effected in the original plan following suggestions from these experts. Shahu was aware that the project could not be completed without the support of the Bombay government, and hence pursued the matter with it. He tried hard to persuade the Governor to visit the project site, because he thought that it would quicken the construction.

Shahu wrote to the British officials concerned requesting them to arrange the governor's visit. His efforts finally succeeded. The then Bombay Governor, Lord Lamington, visited the Kolhapur state between March 21 and March 24, 1908, according to an Administrative Report of 1907-08. The Governor also visited the project site at Dajipur on March 23, 1908. He had assured Shahu all help in the execution of the project as it was going to benefit the Kolhapur state most. In a communication dated March 9, 1909, the Governor wrote: "My earnest desire is that this fine work shall be a permanent memorial of your beneficient rule..... It's a fine conception, full of great possibilities and nothing that Your Highness could do would be of such great and permanent benefit to the State."

The Governor deputed chief engineer and secretary of public works department to Kolhapur for proper guidance on the project. Shahu visited a large irrigation project in Nashik, in Novemer 1909, to get some idea. This visit is mentioned in Shahu's letter to Political Department, Bombay(November 5, 1909); but there is no reference to any specific project.

All these communications show Shahu's persistent personal efforts to ensure the best and flawless dam construction. The actual construction was launched in November 1909, at the hands of Maharani Laxmibai, after whom the reservoir is named.

Geographical Situation

The Bhogavati river originates in the Sahyadri range, 60 miles west of Kolhapur. It wends its way through hilly region to reach Kolhapur, from where it begins its onward journey through the plains. The region receives an annual rainfall of 200 inches. Bhogavati and other 15 rivers originating in the Western ghats flow through the fertile easterly plain land. Considering this geographical position, Shahu decided to construct a 40-foot high dam on the Bhogavati. It was the right site for a dam. It was easier to reach a stratum strong enough for the foundation here. (The catchment area was 42.5 square miles. The reservoir water spread over seven square miles, according to a PWD report of 1952). The dam was expected to fill to its capacity every year, in view of the abundant rainfall and the large catchment area. An average annual rainfall of 174.86 inches

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has been recorded ever since the dam was constructed. Barring 20 per cent wastage of the water due to evaporation and percolation, 80 per cent of the stored water is used. The height of the dam when completed was to be 140 feet.

Consultations with Experts

Shahu was constantly in touch with British experts during its construction. He communicated with Kolhapur state's ex-political agent, Lt. Col. W.B. Ferris, Sir W.T. Morrison, Bombay's ex-Governor Lord Sydneham, and Bombay Government's chief engineer A. Hill. He writes to Lt. Col. Ferris: "Since you left us, I built about 20 tanks. But my ambition was not satisfied. So I have taken up now a big irrigation scheme and the tank would be the biggest in India. I spend all my energy on it. Now Bapusaheb and myself are working on the site. I only wish that it may prove a success." He also discussed the Radhanagri dam scheme in his correspondence with Hill to seek advice on various related points like the construction material, strength of the dam, appointment of engineer, and inspection of the construction. The project was too ambitious for that period, and therefore, Shahu frequently consulted with Bombay governors over the necessary resources, loan, and other help. Several British officers seem to have visited the dam site on Maharaja's insistence and praised Shahu and his work. Hunting missions were arranged in the Dajipur jungle for the British guests.

Actual Dam Construction

The contract for the dam construction was initially awarded to Bombay's Crowder & Co. But the company didn't carry out the work as per its agreement with the Kolhapur durbar. The estimated cost of the project was Rs. 33 lakh, according to a 1908-09 report. From 1909 onwards, the work was carried out partially through contract system, and partially through the Kolhapur state's department. Shahu's younger brother, Bapusaheb personally supervised the work, assisted by superviser Mitter and assistant engineer Gupte. The foundation work was done fast, because the rock at the site was hard rock. After the preliminary work like starting stone quarries, laying of a small rail, and storage of sand, the stone work began after about one year. Bombay Government's PWD secretary Hill visited the site and expressed satisfaction over the foundation work and stone construction. According to a 1910-11 report, a survey was carried out for right bank canal, under the guidance of British engineer Hankel. The Bombay Government had asked its superintending engineer Wright to visit the dam site every three months. According to a 1913-14 report, B. P. Jagtap was appointed the executive engineer. During 1918-19, the work had stopped, as the administrative report of that year mentions that no expenditure was incurred on Radhanagri dam. The following chart will show the annual progress of the construction:

Year	construction (cubic feet)	Expenditure (Rs)	Work
1909-10	.....	66,000	2000
1910-11	2,00,000	68,299	3,000
1911-12	2,52,700	1,29,173	3,100

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1912-13	4,10,577	1,47,067	3,100
1913-14	9,12,977	2,07,968	3,100
1914-15	7,61,000	1,99,167	3,000
1915-16	6,00,000	2,25,219	—
1916-17	5,09,300	1,83,704	2,060
1917-18	61,128	33,946	—

(Ref : Kolhapur State's 1909-1918 Administrative Reports)

Overcoming several odds like resource crunch and lack of modern technology, the 40-foot high dam was completed in 1918, with an expenditure of about Rs. 14 lakh. About six million cubic feet water from the reservoir was stored in temporary bunds every time and supplied to agriculture. The height of the dam was increased after 1946, and by 1957, the work was completed.

Shahu established a small township near the Laxmi reservoir, and it was named after his daughter, hence Radhanagari. He provided all help for the development of Radhanagari and encouraged trading, farming, and tea cultivation there.

Problems faced during construction

Several problems arose during the dam construction. Contractors were not up to the mark initially. Doubts were raised about whether the project would be economically beneficial. A long canal had to be routed through hilly region for the benefit of Karveer and Alte talukas. Another option was to divert the river flow, and then construct the canal in the region outside the Kolhapur state limits. Shahu was also worried about the durability of the dam, because the catchment area receives an annual rainfall to the tune of 200 inches. He, therefore, deputed his executive engineer to hold consultations with Hill. His primary concern was that the project should be successful and that the people from his principality should benefit from it. Shahu knew that similar projects in some other states had failed, e.g. a port at Bhavnagar, or large tanks in Kathewad where no water could be stored. He believed that these projects failed because the construction was flawed, and hence, he wanted to avoid those mistakes. He said once: "As a layman, I wish to use common sense, brains, and efforts not to have such failures."

Shahu had sought the expertise of several engineers, and had come to the conclusion that two engineers never spoke in one voice. Hill, Hankel, Wright, and Dalal offered him varying advices. Shahu was confused, and worried, about the future of the dam. He wanted to appoint Dalal as an expert engineer who had constructed Marknavi dam in Mysore State. But he first wanted to consult Hill on this appointment. Dalal had earlier visited the dam site and had found fault with every aspect - sand was sub-standard, *chunkhadi* was of low quality, the foundation was not strong, and it would have to be widened... But Hill felt that the construction material was of good quality, and that the foundation work was also strong. Shahu, therefore, thought that Dalal was unnecessarily exaggerating the things, and he decided to accept Hill's opinion. All the same, he was little disappointed because of all these happenings, and said once: "It has given me great anxiety, and I repent for ever starting this work."

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Progress after Shahu's Demise

The dam construction could not be completed in his lifetime, because of financial and other constraints. All-out efforts were made by the Kolhapur state. Even the Bombay Government gave all possible help. The construction picked up pace only after 1946. The dam height was increased to 126 feet, with an expenditure of Rs. 245 lakh, between 1949 and 1955. As much as 8,362 million cubic feet water was stored in the reservoir. Originally, the dam was intended to supply water to agriculture, thereby reducing the severity of droughts. Later, it also generated power, and supplied water to Kolhapur city. Four generators with a total capacity of 1.2 megawatt power were installed. They produce about one crore units of electricity annually. Henry Howard, M. Viswesaraiyya, C.G. Kole visited the dam after 1940, and offered invaluable advice.

Initially it was planned to provide water to agriculture through flow irrigation. But the river flowed through a valley. Because of the peculiar geographical situation, it was not practical to build canals by cutting across the hills or digging tunnels. Canals or other such waterways for irrigation are possible only after a river reaches the plains. In case of Radhanagai dam, the water that flowed from the dam to the river was first stopped and stored in a temporary bund, and then supplied for irrigation. But this system proved to be expensive, because every time water was released from the bund, there was land erosion.

Later, Rajaram Maharaja constructed the first permanent bund at Bawda near Kolhapur in 1938. That was the beginning of the Kolhapur type bunds, which have now become common all over Maharashtra. At present, there is a total of 13 bunds, private and government, on the Bhogavati and Panchaganga rivers. The water is supplied to sugarcane farms and for food grain production through lift irrigation system. Most lift irrigation equipment is now owned by powerful co-operative societies in Kolhapur district, and some individuals. According to 1952 Bombay State's PWD report of 1952, the Radhanagri dam supplied water to 11,000 acres of sugarcane fields, and 3,000 acres of foodgrain farming. It was anticipated that after the project was fully operational, it would supply water to 12,000 acres of sugarcane, and 10,000 acres of foodgrain cultivation. But by 1980, a total of 17,800 hectars of land was brought under irrigation, as against its actual capacity of 26,560 hectars.

Main Features of the Dam

1. 140-feet dam with stone construction.

2. Power generation station at the base of the dam, and the power generated here utilized for lift irrigation schemes, industrial and domestic purposes.

3. Kolhapur type bunds for water supply to agriculture, mainly sugarcane cultivation.

4. Bhogavati and Panchaganga river water used for agriculture on both the banks of the rivers.

5. Water supply to Kolhapur and Ichalkaranji cities.

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6. Fishing and fish-farming undertaken.

7. Boost for boating.

8. Communication means available because of the bunds on both the rivers.

9. Water supplied to agriculture at very low rates, thereby giving a boost to more foodgrain production.

Benefits of the Project

The Radhanagri dam brought about certain fundamental socio-political, economic and cultural changes in the Kolhapur district and its rural area. Sugarcane production increased. It, in turn, led to increase in jaggery production, and opening of sugar factories. The sugar factories also concentrated on social activities such as education, sports, recreation facilities. Trades, transport, and communiction network expanded. Foodgrain production went up. Cash in-flow, even in the rural farmer's house, increased. There was a rise in agricultural investment and agro-research. Domestic and small industries, as also agro-based industries progressed. Dairy business, poultry and cattle farming prospered. All these changes created more employment opportunities.

The irrigation capacity of the Radhanagri dam and 13 Kolhapur type bunds stands at 26,860 hectares, including 17,410 hectares of sugarcane field, and 9,450 hectares of rabbi crops. A total of 133 villages from the Karveer, Radhanagri, Hatkanangle, Shirol, Panhala talukas have been brought under irrigation. 83 lift irrigation schemes on the Bhogavati river and 141 schemes on the Panchaganga river are operational. Power generation touched an all time high of 1,53,28,510 units in 1993-94.

The dam is filled to its capacity every year, and the region is reaping rich benefits from it. Rs 1.9 crores were spent on its construction, while Rs 5.95crores have been spent on its strengthening until March 1995.

This then is the story of the Radhanagri dam, a living memorial of Shahu's vision. The Bhogavati river water has been flowing through the dam for years together making the adjoining region prosperous. The Radhanagri project is an ideal example worth emulating. The country's economy would prosper if such projects are replicated everywhere.

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22

Dhangar-Maratha Inter-caste Marriage Initiated by Shahu

Vasudha J. Pawar
History Scholor

Great Reformist

Rajashri Shahu Chhatrapati has made invaluable contribution in the making of modern Maharashtra. He has his unique place carved in the history of not only Maharashtra, but that of India as the king who inherited the thoughts of Mahatma Phule.

Here was a king, who, instead of wallowing in obscene luxuries like most other princes under the British, lived true to his principle, that "the royal power is nothing but a tool of social service." He was a rare king who spear-headed movements like abolishing untouchability, abolishing apartheid, promoting intercaste marriages, spreading education amongst the supressed, etc.for the betterment of backward classes.

Shahu's Thoughts on Abolishing Caste-based Discrimination

Abolishing discrimination on caste basis was Shahu's top priority. He was of the opinion that such discrimination coupled with untouchability was a blot on Hindu society and was basically responsible for social inequality and lack of national integrity. While expressing his opinion that the upper, priviledged class has to initiate such a move, Shahu says, "The main reason, Japan could do away with its caste-based discrimination is the initiative shown by the upper class Samurai people to do so. Had it not been done (by them), condition of Japan would never have improved. If the movement to destroy caste-based discrimination gets initiated from the lower, underpriviledged stratum, the results may be disastrous..... While the same if initiated by so-called priviledged people, it can prove as an example for the other classes. What ideally the upper castes should do is to step down a bit, extend a hand to the lower castes and bring them up. That's when probably

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this difficult task is likely to succeed. Even we the Marathas have to abolish our strong caste structure and unite...."[1]

Shahu publicly and openly advocated his rebellious thought that the most effective way to abolish caste-based discrimination, was to promote intercaste marriages. Says he in one of his speeches, "Progress of this country and its time frame solely depends upon the extent to which caste discrimination is abolished. For this, it is highly necessary to widely promote the relations through marriages, between various castes. People will easily transact between castes for bread and money - it's not so, when matters come to bridal exchanges. All the legal and social barriers to such an exchange must be abolished."[2]

On another occasion, Shahu praised both Shivaji and Akbar, who tried effectively to abolish caste discrimination. He says "Chhatrapati Shivaji even converted Muslims into Marathas, and for a national cause created the artillery of Mahars and Mangs (the under priviledged classes), thus shattering the concepts of untouchability. We truly salute Akbar who made unity of Hindu & Muslims, married a Hindu woman called Jodhabai and yet allowed her to follow her own Hindu religion.... A deed, which has become impossible in the 20th century, a Muslim Emperor had accomplished in the 17th century.[3]

Deeds Match Words

Shahu matched his words with actions. He brought out a public notification preventing all sorts of caste based discrimination and untouchability at all schools, sanitoriums, government offices, hospitals and public places. He turned this notification into a law.[4] He went a long step ahead and made a law which uprooted the very foundation of caste-based law, legalizing intercaste marriages. The draft of the new law began, "These days, many castes have emerged in the Hindu and Jain societies. Tradition prevents weddings amongst these various castes. However, such intercaste relations were prevalent in ancient times. Hence, it is quite right if any Jain or Hindu person is allowed to marry person from other caste without observing any restrictions. Also it will be appropriate to decide a procedure of marriage for such persons to ensure that such weddings are acknowledged by law."[5]

Shahu implemented this revolutionary law in his state in the year 1919. It was a giant leap forward in those times. In the year 1917, Vitthalbhai Patel had presented a bill in the Central Legislative Council of India which proposed legalising intercaste marriages. This bill was known throughout the country as the "Patel bill" evoking vehement opposition from all conservative and orthodox lobbies led by Lokmanya Tilak, Shankaracharya of Puri and Karveer Shankaracharya. Of course, progressive leaders like Sir Tejbahadur Sapru, Lata Lajpatrai, Shahu Maharaja had supported it. The orthodox lobby feared that if the bill got passed it would result in total anihilation of 'Dharma' and there would be a 'racial intermixing'. Such a feeling was natural for those who believed that true religion meant observing caste-based discrimination.

Sayajirao Maharaja of Baroda was

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also progressive and reformist prince like Shahu. When his daughter Indiraraje decided to marry the prince of Cooch Bihar in Bengal (Prince Narendra Naryan), he gave his consent not caring for the tradition. Cooch Bihar dynasty were Bengali Kshatriyas who had adopted Brahmo Samaj as their way of life.

This decision of Sayajirao was widely praised by Shahu. He later initiated wedding of his elder son Prince Rajaram, with granddaughter of Sayajirao – Indumatiraje, thus publicly approving Baroda's daring inter-state marriage. But Shahu wanted to go a step ahead; More than an intercaste marriages between two Kshatriya families, he planned to descend the social ladder. He mooted a daring and adventurous step - a wedding between his Kshatriya royal family and that of Holkar dynasty of Indore, who were Dhangar by caste. He negotiated a marriage between his uncle's daughter i.e. his cousin sister with Tukojirao Holkar's son Yashwantrao.

Shahu first drew the plan of intercaste marriages between Maratha and Dhangar communities in Kolhapur and Indore States. In a letter to Tukojirao, Shahu had asked him to create a trust and faith in those families so that they were ready for such marriages, or were at least curious about it. Accordingly, Tukojirao conducted a meeting of the Dhangar community in Indore, took their consent and conveyed accordingly to Shahu. Soon both the kings, with each other's consultations, decided to go ahead and proceed for 100 such intercaste marriages. It was decided, that rupees sixty thousand would be spent on these weddings and the couples would be given all sort of help including land etc. from both the states. As per the plan, 25 such marriages took place and were quite successful.[6]

Shahu Maharaja wished that subjects would follow the movement of intercaste marriages once their kings initiated it between themselves. So, began the movement from his royal household only. His uncle was none other than a Chief of Princely State of Kagal, Kakasaheb Maharaja. His daughter, Chandraprabha, was to wed Yashwantrao.

We can't imagine the efforts Shahu must have made to mend the traditional thinking of his uncle and the family to set up such a marriage in those times more than 75 years ago. A reputed Maratha royal family, giving away their daughter to a Dhangar family (even though a royal one) was a revolutionary step. Only a rebel reformist like Shahu could do it.

Unfortunately, Shahu was not to witness this event with his own eyes. As, on 6th May 1922, he suddenly passed away. The event was put off for a while. In 1924, Shahu's heir Rajaram fulfilled his father's wishes.

The Holkar-Ghatge Engagement

The couple got engaged on 30 December 1923, at Indore, with fanfare and celebrations. The Pune based newspaper "Vijayi Maratha", owned by Satyashodhak reformist Shripatrao Shinde, while expressing joy wrote thus : "This wedding, between the two royal families of Dhangar and Maratha, is blessed by Shreemat Kshatrajagadguru. It has received supporting telegrams from

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Baroda, Dhar, Dewas, and other princely states. We understand, that as per Shahu's wishes, Aaisaheb Maharaj (queen of Shahu) and Akkasaheb Maharaj (daughter of Shahu) have taken a lead, in making this sacred event a success."[7]

Wedding Ceremony at Indore

The grand wedding took place at Indore on 9th February 1924. The "Vijayi Maratha" has published its accounts in details.

According to the contemporary traditions, the rituals lasted from 1st February to 9th February. Rajaram Maharaja, however couldn't attend the function, due to some unavoidable reason. Although he had sent many of his trusted Sardars like Nimbalkar, Savardekar, Gaikwad etc. Participants from the Kolhapur party included many Satyashodhak workers like Baburao Jagtap, Shripatrao Shinde etc. Many princes had deputed their representatives with generous presents. This included those from the princely states of Baroda, Mysore, Patiala, Bhavnagar etc. Everyone, engaged in the arrangement of this event fondly remembered Shahu. The editor of "Vijayi Maratha" Shripatrao Shinde presented a beautiful photograph of Chhatrapati to Tukojirao on this occasion. As per records available, Tukojirao rose and saluted the photograph of Shahu in a typical Maratha Manner - *(Mujra)*.[8]

In keeping with their character that socially orthodox newspapers in Maharashtra like "Kesari" did not pay any heed to this socially important event. What was surprising and was condemned by the Satyashodhak community was the apathy shown towards the event by the so-called 'progressive' and 'moderate' newspapers of Pune.[9]

It was natural that Satyashodhak movement and it's leaders would welcome the happening with open heart. The "Vijayi Maratha" wrote a special editorial under the title, "Union of Kagal and Indore royal families" and lauded the cause of Shahu. It ran, "Chhatrapati Shahu, during his life time, infused life in the movement of non -Brahmins. There is no doubt on this. It will be heartening for millions of his followers to witness his thoughts now getting converted into action and reality."[10]

Historical Analysis

The wedding was one of the unparalleled events of those times. It proved, that like Mahtma Phule, Shahu Maharaja was an action-oriented reformist. Even today, in the higher circles of the Maratha society, intercaste marriages are exceptional. Only good thing is that these days such people are not ostracized. However, to do anything of this nature in those times was definitely inviting for trouble. But confronting such troublesome situations was Shahu's born temperament. He never cared for the orthodox society while implementing reforms.

However, after a scrutiny of the Maratha society today, we cannot escape a conclusion that it was only Shahu who could do it and other daring social experiments. His followers always felt that such steps were beyond their their capabilities. It is unfortunate that the

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social psychology of the masses has not followed the longer vision of Shahu.

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23

Shahu – Our Own Abrahm Lincoln

Ganesh Akaji Gavai
Leader of Untouchables and Editor of *Bahishkrit Bharat*

Many lived, many will
Many do.....
But no one like him.....

Destiny suddenly pounced on Shahu Maharaja, the great asset of Maharashtra, on 6 May 1922 and caused a varitable havoc.

We feel confused and directionless even as the mountain of Maharashtra, purifier of the Brahmin souls, confidence of the non-Brahmins, God of the untouchables and a friend of the English leaves us orphaned.

That the sad news is a bolt from the blue for the untouchables and that it has seared them thoroughly is not surprising. Unmindful of personal risks, Shahu was determined to ameliorate the lot of the people of Maharashtra whom he loved so dearly. His love for the untouchables was extraordinary. If today we find some touchables doing excellent social work in Bombay, Nagpur etc., the credit goes to Shahu.

Shahu's special characteristic was that he would not only financially help needy people, but he would personally take interest in the welfare of the poor and the oppressed and encouraged them to work for the society.

Truely, God had given immense power to our Shahu Maharaja to accomplish what no sage or sadhu could do for centuries - to wipe out the blot of untouchability on the people who were granted the 'Watan' of perpetual slavery, who became mental slaves because of their ignorance and who were made more miserable and helpless than dumb animals because of the touch taboo imposed on them. With Shahu being the jewel in the crown of the non-Brahmin society and their affectionate king, we (the untouchables) could get full empathy of the non-Brahmin masses. Shahu was a man of determination and he always found ways

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to solve issues. He told the untouchables at the Nagpur conference, "If you ever happen to encouter a dire crisis, I shall hand over my throne to my son and be at your service...." These words, fit for Buddha and Gods in the heavens to applaud, still resound in our ears. Shahu knew history enough not to wait for historical evolution to end untouchability, or how futile it is to embrace another creed or engage in empty rhetoric. And so he had begun to use his most potent weapon – a weapon which Rome and Japan had tested - to eliminate untouchability: the force of law! If you want to see how effective is this weapon, then pray, pay some atention to the new wave of thinking among the Brahmins which exhorts unity between Brahmins and non-Brahmins!

But we are unfortunate indeed. Our own Abrahm Lincoln, who proved that a seed sown with love did not produce poison, whose very name struck terror in the hearts of our enemies, whose methods for eradication of untouchability had to be emulated by the British rulers and who has brightened the face of India by wiping out the scourge of untouchability - has left for the last journey leaving us behind to face possible harasments and humiliations.....

Bhagwan Shahu's will is our religion. Let God summon his durbar to welcome and felictate this great soul in His world. That is the feeling of all ostracised people of India, whether they are from Mumbai Pune, Nagpur, Delhi or Madras.

(From Bahishkrit Bharat with acknowledgements.)

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24.

Shahu's Life and Work

Bhagwantrao Palekar
Satyashodhak & Editor of Jagriti, Baroda

Barring a handful of intolerant people, everyone in Maharashtra - young and old – is shocked by the untimely death in Mumbai of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja of Karveer State. When he was in Baroda recently for the wedding of Gaikwad princess Laxmidevi, people here never imagined it was their their last chance to have Shahu's glimpse. The whole Maharashtra province is today grieving his demise. Marathi-speaking backward class people outside Maharashtra are stunned with his death. All this was not because Shahu was a chief of a notable principality. It is because he has received approval of the people on the strength of his deeds and capabilities.

Extraordinary Intellect

Shahu's excellent skills in horse-riding and hunting and his amazing physical prowess were matched by his extraordinary intellect.Even Balwantrao Tilak had appreciated his intelligence. To begin with, Shahu was moulded in old-fashioned social atmosphere. But he was sharp enough soon to understand the imperative of social reforms. The *Vedokta* issue of Kolhapur was the first war cry of the backward caste's vigorous upsurge. Many differ on *Vedokta*, but all should agree that it re-kindled the self-respect of non-Brahmin classes. Undeniably, it was after this episode that Shahu turned to religious reforms. The movement spread wildly and virgorously in Maharashtra because it was sponsored by Shahu. Any weak man or soft-spined king in place of Shahu could have been demolished in no time by the casteist forces in Maharashtra. But Shahu was more than a match to his adversaries. To each of their plot, he had a counter-plot. Efforts were made to sully Shahu's image, implicate him in unsavoury acts, Brahmins princes and some of his own caste men tried to destroy his throne. But all their conspiracies proved futile before the super strategies of this stateman king. We are pained to make these references today. But some Brahmin adversaries and their

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newspapers are so poisoned with Shahu's hatred that even in his death they could not show ordinary decency and formality. This forces to sadly note their enduring hatred on this occassion.

Liberal to the Core

Another important quality of the Maharaja was his social and religious liberalism. Whether it is Arya Samaj movement, *Vedokta* issue, liberation of untouchables, spread of education, improvement of backward classes—Shahu supported every progressive reform movement. Maharaja Shahu was proud of being a Maratha. He always helped any effort to spread education among Marathas. His heart pained at the decline of the social and religious status of Marathas. But significantly, his vision was not restricted to Maratha community alone. Social and religious equality was his aim and he did not tolerate even his caste bretheren who opposed this. All those classes backward in education received his generous love and helping hand. His affectionate commitment to the untouchables will make any progressive social reformer proud.

Shahu was action-oriented reformer and not an empty talker. He acted boldly in the *Vedokta* episode and his practical accomplishments in eradication of untouchability would put to shame many talkative reformers. As a true leader, he personally set the example by putting an end to touch taboo. The awakening caused among the non-Brahmins of Maharashtra by Shahu is of far greater order than non-Brahmin awakening in Madras Presidency by Dr. Nair. Shahu showed that kind of active courage in destroying untouchability which the non-Brahmin leaders of Madras could not muster. He employed every possible means for social reform and never insisted this or that method nor did he uphold any one cult or sect. He used Satyashodhak ideology as also the Arya Samajist methods. In bringing social awareness, he promoted improvement of individual castes and simultaneously propagated ending caste differences.

Epoch-making Contribution

Greatness of a person has to be assesed on the basis of his or her contribution. Character faults or shortcomings of policies remain secondary to the volume and quality of his contribution. Shahu's work was significant. To awaken and inculcate self-respect among the educationally backward classes who were bonded in centuries of social slavery was Shahu's objective. He was to carry them forward with support and encouragement for some distance on this path. Shahu accomplished this task with selfless courage. Shahu followed in the foot-steps of ancient kshatriyas like Gautam Buddha who visualised religion in liberal mould. This is why he was acknowledged by the backwards and untouchables as 'Rajarshi'.

Shahu was a true 'Rajarshi' in his daily habits and living style. He was averse to pomp and decorative attire. His needs were few and frugal. His kingly character manifested not in his living style but in his laerge-heartedness and behaviour towards others. He never felt embarassed in mixing with common people and poorest of the poor was never afraid of approaching him. Everyone had

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access to him. He knew no vanity or empty pride. Shahu was well posted about happenings in his state mainly because of his close interaction with the people. He was a master mind-reader and few could deceive him. His mental and moral courage matched his physical courage. While carrying forward the social reform movement, he never cared for conservative opinions of the masses. He boldy faced all conspiracies to demonise him and falsely implicate him in vile deeds. He showed affection for the untouchables with his actions and evoked the wrath of many non-Brahmins. Some of his caste people criticised him. Shahu hardly cared and suffered all such assaults stoically.

In hunting, Shahu was never afraid of a tiger or a bear; he did not flinch and stood his ground when an angry elephant marched on him; similarly, fear did not touch his heart when public opinion – formed out of ignorance – was enraged against him. If Shahu were to born in an earlier age, his qualities would have givn him a boundless scope to work for the welfare of society and he could have achieved wonders. There are many prejudices about him – for various reasons. One, he never appeased public opinion. People's service was his commitment. Many believed he hated the Brahmin caste. But the fact is he hated no caste.

Against Casteism, not Caste

The dispute was on principles not the hatred of any specific caste. Shahu patronised many Brahmins. Many others were in his perpetual debt. Even today (1922), many Bahmins hold high posts in his administration. Any Brahmin who shedded his prejudicial caste vainglory was dear to him. He did not like even non-Brahmins puffed up with empty caste pride. Shahu's contribution in social and religious reforms is ever-lasting. It is so important that eventually it would strengthen the foundations of the national movement. With this contribution, he can be unhesitatingly counted among the top national leaders of India.

His untimely death has stunned the movement he so fondly nurtured. Marathas have bcome nervous, the Satyashodhak movement has lost its right arm, and the shelter of love and generosity over the utouchables has collapsed. The damage may not be repaired for another half century. The connoisseur of talents, supporter of enthusiastic young social workers, the general of social and religious movements is lost. Courage was Shahu's outstanding characteristic. Shahu will be happy if the soldiers he left behind show similar courage and emulate him in continuing the just movements fostered by him .

(From *Jagriti*, May 13, 1922, with acknowledgements)

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25

Shahu - Saviour of the Oppressed

Shripatrao Shinde
Editor of 'Vijayi Maratha', Satyashodhak Leader

The Saviour of the oppressed is no more....

In the early hours of Saturday morning, the most famous of the victorious Marathas, the saviour of the oppressed classes, leader of all non-Brahmin communities, the champion of truth, the king who held an umbrella of love and affection on his poor subjects, departed from the Earth.

The life of Maharashtra is no more, its divine light extinguished. The king who laid the foundation of the future democracy is now silent forever. The Magician who converted the lifeless stones -the oppressed class- into vibrant human beings by introducing the 'Mantra' of education, has suddenly done the vanishing trick.

The life of Chatrapati Shahu is quite inspiring. Whenever a neatly presented picture of his life is published, the intellectuals will be obliged to admit that ever since the degenerationof Maharashtra, not for a hundred years a leader of Shahu's stature and intelligence was born and nor can one say when one to equal him will come. Blessed with an impeccable decision making ability of such high ethical and moral standards that he had the knack of subtly unraveling the most intriguing political situation with his quick and uncanny decisions, the examples of which abound. He could be rightly termed as the 'Bhishmacharya' of the non-Brahmin princely families. In his death, the colonical rulers lost a trusted political friend and the non-Brahmin princely states, a wise guru; that is how history will record it....

The essence of Shahu's character is not his political acumen alone. Had he but indulged only in politics, he would not have to face the ferocious assault of the army of nationalist monkeys. With his natural foresight, he had observed the state of affairs in Maharashtra closely, analysed the reasons for its decline and accurately and objectively found out the forces respopnsible for this degeneration. And then to bring

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about social and religious improvements, Shahu decided to uproot the treacherous priesthood completely. The reason why the Brahmins - specially the Chittapavan Brahmins- hated Shahu was that he trampled upon their historical authority and destroyed it by teaching the lower castes that superiority by virtue of birth of the upper castes is a very hollow notion. That human beings are all born equal; that there are no upper or lower castes, touchable or untouchables; nor are the Brahmins the sole agents of *'Moksha'* (Freedom from rebirth). Every person is capable of achievement. To propagate such lofty ideals in the world of the downtrodden, he bravely assaulted the Brahminical concept of superiority by birth and filled the non-Brahmin castes with consciousness of their own dignity. He successfully breathed very life into them and built their organisation. A Heculean task which Shivaji could not carry out was successfully accomplished by Shahu of 20th century. The magical awakening of the non-Brahmin masses has struck terror in the hearts of the religios hegemonists with its new-found creative energy. This phenomenal paradigm shift in the social life can be attributed solely to Shahu Chatrapati and that is also the reason why the *Kesari* caucus of Pune hates him so avidly. The racket created by terming Shahu as a 'traitor' has deeper roots in the ancient Vedic belief of Brahmin superiority which was so boldly challenged and destroyed courageously by this great Chatrapati himself.

The love and affection of the masses for Shahu and Maharashtra's strong faith in him, was borne out by the ceremonial function on 19-11-21 in Pune when the memorial of Shivaji the Great was inaugurated. More than 40,000 people, the true representatives of Maharashtra - the farmers and the 'Mavalas' had gathered for the function. Shahu thought that the Prince of Wales should personally see these people and requested him to join the crowd with him. When the Governor expressed his apprehension, Shahu said "Don't be afraid. I have total faith in the affection of my people for me. And as long as the Prince is with me the 'Chaphekar' types have no chance to cast an eye on him. If at all they dare to shoot, my chest will stop those bullets as long as I am not dead." Shahu personally led the Prince into the crowd amidst a rousing applause. What a faith and what great popularity Shahu enjoyed.

The reader must have already grasped what our opinion of our Lord Shri Shahu Chhatrapati is really like. But today we shall see his greatness by having a look at the public opinion about him which is published. Brahmin opinion of Shahu would be inevitably biased as most of his work was against established Brahmin supremacy. Yet such was the greatness of his mission that the most sharp tongued Brahmins too would be forced to sing praises about it. Not a credit to Brahmins though but a stamp of greatness of Shahu. *Induprakash and Tilak* of Bombay have freely praised the greatness of Rajarshi and has shed tears for him. In their opinion, Maharaja was an extraordinary person who has etched his name in the history of India. The sheer force of his mission to uplift the downtrodden has created waves in the society opines *'Indu'*. 'An unparalled Gem expires' laments *Tilak*. 'The death of Maharaja has removed a leading

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personality from many a social cause', says *Chaitanya* from Belgaum and conforms his extraordinary public spirit. One of Shahu's sternest critic, Dr. Kurtkoti who runs the *'Swadharma'* publications bestows sainthood on Shahu and goes on to add that his death would leave entire Maharashtra in grief. Papers like *Dnyanprakash, Loksangrah* which are distinctly pro-Barhmin have not been sportive enough in praising Shahu yet have confessed to his unique achievements in the revolutionary awaking of the untouchable community, his great intelligence and physical prowess. *'Pragati', Jinvijay', 'Prabhodhan', 'Aryabahnu'. 'Dyansagar', 'Sayaji Vijay' 'Subodh Patrika'* etc. have expressed their heart-felt gratitude for his work for the unfortunate Indian people. They have praised him for his very superior intellect and physical powers. And last but not the least, the non-Brahmin journals and the Satyashodhak Samaj have – barring one - candidly confessed that the void caused by Shahu's death cannot be filled; and indeed how true it is! The condolonce meetings being held throughout India by the non-Brahmin communities number in hundreds every day. The expression of grief amongst the non -Brahmin communities in cities like Delhi, Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Dewas, Dhar, Mumbai, Pune, Satara, Kolhapur, Belgaum, Hubli, Dharwad, Madras etc. is heart wrenching. The supreme leaders of the non -Brahmin communities of Madras such as Sir P. Tyagaraj Chetti, Hon. Raja Ramaraya Ningar, Dr. Natesh Mudaliar, G. Narayana Swami and other have held huge rallies and praised the nationally important work of Shahu in eloquent speeches and given him titles like "Great Leader of the non-Brahmins of India', 'The spiritual Leader of the downtrodden communities', 'The democrat of the democrats'. Beyond this eloquent praise, they have also decided to erect manuments in his honour. What does this means? That Shahu was a 'Mahatma' amongst mahatmas whose heart was full of brotherly compassion and love for the poor.

(From 'Vijayi Maratha', 15 & 29 May 1922, with acknowledgments)

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VOLUME - II

Section - II

SPEECHES OF RAJARSHI SHAHU CHHATRAPATI

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Editorial Note

During his regime, Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja made several speeches from various platforms. These speeches form an important part of his biographical source material. They reflect the very basis of his social revolutionary thoughts and are a significant source to assess his works. No book of biography on Shahu can, therefore, be complete without considering these speeches.

Shahu made several of these speeches at functions held by social organisations. Just the names of these organisations indicate the social relevance of the speeches. For example: (1) *Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Shikshan Parishad* (All India Maratha Education Conference), Khamgaon (2) Kamgar Melawa *(Workers' rally)*, Parel, Mumbai (3) *Aryadharma Parishad*, Navsari, Gujarat (4) *Akhil Bharatiya Kurmi Kshatriya Samajik Parishad* (All India Kurmi Kshatriya Social Conference), Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (5) *Asprushya Vargachi Parishad*, (Convention of Untouchables), Mangaon, Kolhapur (6) *Shri Udaji Maratha Vidyarthi Vastigruha*, (Udaji Maratha Students' Hostel) Nashik (7) *Somvanshiya Samaj Adiveshan* (Convention of Somvanshiya Community). Nashik (8) *Akhil Bharatiya Bahishkrut Samaj Parishad* (All India Convention of Ostracised Communities), Nagpur (9) *Karnataka Brahmanetar Samajik Parishad*, (Karnataka non-Brahmin Social Convention) Hubli (10) *Akhil Bharatiya Asprushya Parishad* (All India Untouchables' Convention),Delhi, etc.

In his speeches, Shahu discussed several social topics and problems presenting his progressive views. These topics covered many social, economic, political and religious issues such as untouchability, caste discrimination, upliftment of the backward classes, principle of equality, intellectual freedom, social morals, importance of education, widow remarriage, purdah system, Mahatma Phule, Arya Samaj, Mahatma Gandhi, business, agriculture, industry, labour unions, co-operative movement etc. Reading his thoughts regarding these subjects will help readers get an insight into Shahu's versatile thinking, vision and his ideological character.

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1.

Protecting Unblemished Reputation of Ancestors

This is an exhortation made by Rajarshi Shahu addressed to the Maratha Battalion (March 23, 1916). During the First World War, the Maratha Battalion of the British army was trapped on the banks of the Tigris in Iraq. Unable to get supplies, the Maratha soldiers were nearing starvation. Though scared of being ostracised, they were left with no alternative but to eat horseflesh. On hearing this news, Shahu sent this letter to boost their lagging spirits. He exhorted that they must survive and uphold the unblemished reputation of their ancestors.

My brothers in the Maratha Battalion, officers and soldiers,

For the last two years, the British government has been caught up in the turmoil of war. We take great pride in the fact that the Marathas are being so courageous and upholding the unblemished reputation of our brave ancestors. As you all know, I am a colonel of the British army, and the bravery of our boys makes me especially proud.

Many of us are disappointed that we could not personally participate in the World War. It gives us immense satisfaction to hear that our brothers are fighting day and night and enduring great hardships. My Maratha brothers are carrying out their sacred duty with perseverance and faith. They are in a - big - quandary regarding the type of food their faith allows them to eat, and fear ostracism. Hemmed in by the enemy, their food supplies are dwindling every day. The government has not been able to provide supplies in spite of their best efforts. In such a situation, they must eat whatever they can to survive. This has been stated even in the *Mahabharata*, which also tells us how we should behave in times of trouble. It is clearly stated in our scriptures that there is no taboo on eating horseflesh.

You all know about the *Maha Ashwamedh Yagnya* (Vedic ritual offerings to God when a war horse is sacrificed and its flesh is savoured)that took place in ancient times. In those days, people ate horseflesh. To do the same when you are caught in the clutches of the enemy should not be a problem.

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If my relatives and I had participated in this war, we would have shared your burden and this problem would have been easily solved. Unfortunately, I didn't get the opportunity to serve with you and it is now impossible to come and meet you. So, my brothers, it is my heartfelt prayer that you must brace yourselves, and remembering your duty as mentioned in the scriptures, stay alive on whatever food is available. By doing your duty, uphold the reputation of your ancestors.

My great ancestor and founder of the Maratha Empire, Shivaji, was once trapped in Delhi* with his followers. You all know how he escaped. No one will censure you for eating horseflesh. I give you my word that you will not be ostracised. You can rely on me. I feel like I am trapped there instead of you. I am totally aware of your circumstances. In the name of God, I promise that you will face no obstacle in conducting any religious rituals or marriage ceremonies on your return.

I am signing and sealing this letter to ensure its authenticity. I am sure that you will not disregard my words. I know that you will save your lives without raising unnecessary religious objections, and that you will do your sacred duty to protect the reputation of your ancestors.

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* It should be Agra and not Delhi - Editor

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2.

Education is the Only Solution

The 11th convention of the* Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Shikshan Parishad *was held on December 27, 1917 at Khamgaon. Rajarshi Shahu delivered the following speech as chairman of the convention. He believed that education was the only alternative for the backward classes. Says he, "History tells us that no country progresses without education. In a country drowning in ignorance, no great warriors or diplomats will ever be born. That is why India needs compulsory and free education... The earlier we break the stranglehold of caste, the earlier will we be deserving of freedom. The day this principle is embedded in our minds will be the best day for our country."

Mr. Standon, Sisters and Brothers,

I am very proud to be invited here today by the Maratha Community. I have not come here as a Prince but as a Maratha. I trust that you will all think of me as one of you. You can call me a foot soldier, or farmer or whatever you like. Warriors among you will call me a soldier on the basis of my ancestry. The farmers among you will call me a *Patil* or farmer. Work constraints did not allow me to make a decision about attending this conference right up to the last minute. However, I realised I should not lose this opportunity to meet all of you. My ancestral village Verul, where we were conferred the title of 'Patil', is quite close by. I have tremendous respect for my land and it brings me great joy to stand in front of my people as a farmer.

I am of the firm view that education is our only solution. History tells us that no country progresses without education. In a country drowning in ignorance, no great warriors or diplomats will ever be born. That is why India needs compulsory and free education. Our past was a dark chapter in history. Only one caste had monopoly over education. Manu and other writers of the *shastras* who followed him wrote about the occupations of the various castes. They laid down severe restrictions, on different castes according to the ideals of the time and through this closed the doors of education to people of lower castes. They were not even allowed to read their own religious texts like the Vedas. No other religion

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except Hinduism has the dubious distinction of having such hurtful and blind beliefs. In the last 60 years however, that is after 1857, the reigning British government has thrown open the doors of education to all. I feel we have made a lot of progress since.

From all sides now we can hear voices demanding Swarajya (Self government). The important question is whether we really deserve it. We definitely want Swarajya. It was the British government who first put the idea of Swarajya in our minds and I hope that they are not against the progress of our people. We are grateful that unlike Manu, they did not put obstacles in our path. In fact they are always enthusiastic that we progress. This is not the time or place to discuss an important subject like Swarajya. My view is similar to that of Lord Sydenham. He is my friend and I admire him. He believes that till India is tied up in the caste system, it cannot benefit from the full advantages of Swarajya. He is fearful that power will be in the hands of the upper caste. I am of the opinion that the time will come when the caste system will be broken. I hope that this will happen with our welfare in mind. We will be harming ourselves as long as there are caste differences and misunderstandings between us. You must have realised that it is necessary for us to get rid of this meaningless caste system to bring an end to our inner strife and make us eligible for Swarajya.

It would be appropriate to recount a tale from the *Puranas* about the eradication of the Kshatriyas. We know that Marathas call themselves Kshatriyas. They have been prominent among the warrior class since the times of the Pandavas. We never admit that the Kshatriya class has been eradicated. Our present society believes this to be untrue. Another interpretation can be given to this tale from the *Puranas* - that Earth has been got rid of Kshatriyas, not once but 21 times. The qualities of farming and warring are normally found together. It was believed the Kshatriyas had been said to be eradicated because the farmers had been promoted to the third stage, and no one refuted this at the time. References to this in the *Smriti Purana* indicate that a whole group of Kshatriyas were wiped out. The people in the next was period went a step further and believed that the Kshatriyas had been demoted from even the Vaishya class straight into the Shudra class. All this shuffling of castes was a result of the agitation interested party in society. From events in other parts of the world, such as Japan for example, we can see that our caste system needs to be broken down. It should be our aim to bring about such changes. Unless I have the full support of both Marathas and Brahmins, would it be possible for a person like me to get any kind of success in this venture?

In order to achieve our aims in the present situation, and prepare people, we have to educate society. This is the only way to solve this important question. That is why every society has to strive for the welfare of each person in it. I have followed the methods of education for different societies with care and would like to propagate the same. I have encouraged different castes to progress. I have tried to help leading Maratha families in this way as well. I reiterate that to break the caste system and to bring people together, we should forget old tales such as how Kshatriya Ram won over Brahmin Parshuram. If we continue to remember such tales, we will continue to fight like Ram and Parshuram. We have to put a permanent end to this caste strife. High born people and the landed gentry

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result in the creation of a class system, and this can be seen even in progressive societies. This class system is not as bad as the caste system and has never come in the way of building a nation. Birthright is linked to duty and responsibility.

It is the duty of all upper castes to actively participate in reformist movements. In Japan, the Samurai caste, which was the warrior caste, took the lead in breaking caste restrictions. In the 20th century we should follow the ideals laid before us by our great ancestor from the 17th century, Chhatrapati Shivaji. We should not ignore the example set by him. A person from the Nimbalkar family of Phaltan converted to Islam and married a Muslim woman. Shivaji accepted him back into the fold and with the blessings of his mother Jijabai, got his daughter married to Nimbalkar's son.

This is an example of building up the nation. The only way to show respect to this great man is to adopt the path shown by him. The earlier we break the stranglehold of caste, the earlier will we be deserving of Swarajya. The moment this principle is embedded in our minds will be the best day for our country. We hear that Japan got rid of the caste system in one stroke and the results are there for us to see. Today it is counted as one of the most advanced countries of the world.

I am an admirer of Shivaji and Akbar. They had the foresight and aim to unite this great country. We should follow these eminent national leaders. I don't wish to associate with any group that is going to create a feeling of malice between different castes. We must make maximum efforts to unite all castes for the good of the general people and for the moral and social progress of our great country. If the caste system remains as it is then Swarajya will mean that power is restricted to a handful of people. Of course, this does not mean that I am against Swarajya. We want Swarajya. Until the bad effects of casteism disappear we need the protection and guidance of the British government. To ensure that power does not remain concentrated in the hands of the upper class minority once we gain Swarajya, we should be given the right to elect caste-wise representatives for ten years at least. Only then will we become aware of our rights. Once we understand this, we won't need caste-wise representation. Our municipality is an example of what happens when we don't have caste-wise representation. Representation of the lower castes is only in name there; this mistake should not happen again.

We should first focus on the question of education and its various facets. We are not happy to remain only soldiers and farmers. We need to enter other upper caste occupations like trade and commerce. The progress of the country in the 20th century is dependent on trade and commerce and its related movements. Truly, trade and commerce is the religion of the western countries. Here, I think of religion as a self-serving tool. If we don't have the courage to do business, all our movements will be meaningless. I have full faith in the commerce movement, and I have put both my sons in it. I feel satisfied to say they have accepted the new field happily and are progressing well. Our people need education even if the majority of them are in agriculture. There is no movement that does not need education.

I find it amazing that we have to be taught how to eat and breathe, but it is true. Today even agriculture has become very

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systematic. Those who want to be successful at it have to read and understand the new methods. In the present world war the Marathas have upheld the reputation their ancestors gained on the battlefields. Thus they have displayed their loyalty to the rulers too.... In modern war systems, education is a must. All soldiers need to know how to read about the science of war. Here too, the question of education is important. Those Marathas who are educated will become better soldiers.

In today's wars, men manning the artillery have to be excellent arithmeticians. So I have to reiterate this - all Marathas should be well educated. The current war has given us a good opportunity to serve the empires. We have never got such an opportunity before and will probably never get it again. In such a situation, I feel it is the duty of all castes and groups to assist the government. They should come forward and act in a manner befitting their glorious past. If we fail in our duty now we will have to repent forever.

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3.

Fight for Your Rights

A workers rally was convened on November 10, 1918 at Parel in Mumbai. The meeting was organised to demand that the popular Governor of Bombay Presidency, Lord Willingdon, be given an extension of his term. Willingdon had finished his five-year term as governor and had gained popularity as a person who cared for the welfare of the backward people. Rajarshi Shahu presided over the meeting. In his speech on the occasion, he began by saying, "I am one of you." He exhorted the working class to organise methodically to safeguard their rights. He also made a demand for caste representation in the constitution for the progress of the backward classes.

My Fellow Citizens,

I accepted your invitation to preside over today's meeting with great pleasure and pride as I am one of you.

I take great pleasure in guiding backward class people and seeing them in top positions. Though I have become your leader, I can assure you that I will never lead you astray. I have received more pleasure from accepting your invitation than I would have got from accepting an invitation to a meeting held by the upper class. I never accept such invitations from them because they are capable of standing on their own feet. Often they wish to honour me but I don't accept such invitations. I tell them there are many people more worthy of the honour than I.

Mumbai city is famous for trade and commerce. Till now people in the state thought that business and industry was dependent on the capital of the rich and the management skills of the industrialists. In the western countries, there are two classes, the capitalists and the labourers. There too the capitalists have unlimited powers but now the labourers have formed their unions. A single blade of grass has no strength but when several blades are put together they have the strength to tie down even an elephant. The labourers in England only have to fight for increase in wages. In that society, the class they are born in is not an obstacle to growth. They can easily intermingle with the upper classes. The situation here is different.

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In England labour unions have gained much importance. Their representatives have entered Parliament and are part of the Council of Ministers. They are safeguarding the rights of their people.

In India the majority of the backward class are farmers. I too am one of them. All labourers working in industry are also farmers. Therefore it's best to think of all as one. There is a need to look after the welfare of labourers and the backward classes in our country as well. In India problems of the educated and backward classes are of recent origin. I am of the opinion that Hindu society has suffered greatly because of class discrimination.

Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists treat our backward classes with sympathy and affection. We feel more affinity for them although they are of another religion. In England, since the interests of the capitalists differed from that of the labourers, their representatives did not work to safeguard the rights of the labourers. A similar situation is seen here. The upper classes will never safeguard the rights of the backward classes. For this, caste-wise and class-wise elected representatives are needed. This special scheme is necessary. I have been of this opinion from the very beginning and am making efforts to ensure the same.

Labourers in England established unions for their progress and adopted the path of self-sufficiency. We should also organise such unions. We should educate our children, increase the level of health awareness and thus ensure our own progress. Expecting someone else to do something for you is a sign of weakness. Remember this always. With the help of his people Shivaji Maharaja dealt with the threat our religion faces from other religions. Today too, our religious works, economic and other rights are facing obstacles from rigid traditionalists. We should all fight to do away with this. We don't have to use the sword for this fight. We have the protective umbrella of the British who regard all equally and empathise with the poor. We have started to understand this and that's why we have all gathered here today.

Earlier, there were lots of obstacles to obtaining an education. If the Prince of Satara himself had to be educated (clandestinely)in the middle of the night, what can I say about the situation of others? But that situation does not exist today. Due to the unbiased attitude of the British government, there are no restrictions on us learning to read and write. However much we thank them for this will not be enough. I thought that free and compulsory education would soon be started, but I don't think this will happen unless representatives of the backward classes are in the Council. We must present our aims in a peaceful manner. Our weapons in this fight should be those of unity, brotherhood, trust and perseverance.

My good friends, the late Justice Ranade and Gopalrao Gokhale made great efforts for the progress of the backward class people. They inspired me to make special efforts for the spread of education among the backward classes. Today also, people like Sir Shankaran Nair, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah, Mr. Patel, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Nair, and R. B. Tyagaraj Chetty from Madras and my friends Kothari, Vhora, Latthe, Mukundrao Patil and others in our region are working in this direction. But the number of such people is too small. My heartfelt appeal is for the youth amongst us to selflessly devote themselves to the

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cause of social work and help our brotherhood to progress.

The best example of the generosity of the English people and how they have the welfare of the state in mind is our governor and his wife. I don't need to elaborate how people like Sir William Wedderburn, Hume, Sir George Birdwood and others have worked for our country. Nowadays my close friend Valentine Chirol and Lord Sydenham are working for the welfare of the backward classes. If we consistently had the privilege of such generous people, there is no doubt our progress would be rapid. Our demand that Lord Willingdon remains in office for another five years is thus justified. Today the backward classes have found their voice. We can now speak of our grievances. The English people are fond of the majority opinion. It will be in the people's interest that the governor be allowed to continue here and I am hopeful that the government will consider our demand favourably.

This war has made clear to the entire world that India's political loyalty remains firm. The backward classes have supported the government well during this time. They proved their loyalty through valour on the battlefields. It is unfortunate that the rights of these people have not been taken into account when planning the future of the country. They gave their lives for the Emperor during the World War. Our only request is that the government should not forget the families of these brave soldiers. The War is nearly at an end. God has favoured the truth ful with success and the tyrannical nations have been defeated. Just like the British fought for the cause of the small nations like Belgium, Serbia, etc, they must now fight for the backward classes. For this they will have to take several steps which will be disliked by the upper classes. My good friend and guide, Lord Sydenham is working abroad on the issue of communal representation. I am hopeful that his efforts on our behalf will be successful. We too must continue to fight for this cause with renewed efforts.

Finally, I place before you the example of Belgium and Serbia. Despite facing the onslaught of strong nations like Germany and Austria, they started the War and showed their calibre to the rest of the world. They didn't give up at a time of adversity. They now witness success. We too should fight for our rights. Have faith that God will favour the true side with success. I pray for the success of our efforts to secure the continuance of Lord Willingdon's term for another five years.

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4

Like in England we must have Labour Unions

A public meeting of Mumbai workers was organised to mark the victory of the allied forces in the First World War (November 24, 1918). The People's Union, an organisation of workers inspired by Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja, was launched at the meeting. In his presidential address, Shahu Maharaja said: "We must have here unions of workers like those in England. Everyone must become aware of one's rights." To make the workers aware of their self-respect and identity, Shahu Maharaja once said: "Although I occupy the royal throne of Kolhapur, I am proud to call myself a soldier, farmer or a labourer."

Brothers!

I had given words to the thoughts in the minds of you all at the huge meeting held in Parel on November 10 last. I had urged you to form unions like those of workers in western countries and improve your lot through unity. Accordingly, you have established the People's Union. This is a very good development.

There are two powerful parties in England — capitalists and pro-labour. The general impression is that their interests clash. Actually, if everyone takes care of one's own rights without encroaching upon the legitimate rights of others, there will be no room for disputes. The day the upper crust people realise that and act accordingly thus allowing the down-trodden to hold their head high will be a red letter day. I hope that the dawn of such a day is near. Even in India, we have Brahmin and non-Brahmin parties. The differences between them are getting clear by the day. The life of the non-Brahmin group has been deteriorated because of their illiteracy and ignorance. They virtually are slaves today. On their labour live people who never undertake physical work. Sometimes, the labour class is incited and misled along the wrong direction. To aggravate the situation, the capitalist principles of the West are being deployed here to further exploit the working class. We have to work selflessly for improving the conditions of workers. You people have started doing that and so I must congratulate you.

Brahmins have set up exclusive institutions like Brahmansabha,

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Shankarwadi, Meemansa Vidyalaya for themselves and kept others out. They have thus laid the foundations of disunity. In fact, the sensible and educated class should set an example of harmony and love for others, but it does not do so. The Arya Samaj has now taken the task upon itself. I am a disciple of Arya Samaj's well-known leader, Sir Pratapsinh Maharaja. I have read many books on the subject. It's not that Dayanand Saraswati is propounding his own thoughts as the ideas of the Arya Samaj. Swami Dayanand, Nityanand, my friends Pandit Atmaram and Swami Parmanand are reigniting the timeless principles enunciated in the Vedas. These holy men are trying to destroy the false ideas forced into Dharma by priests after forging themselves into a caste. For that we must thank these holy men.

I shall tell you briefly how I happened to agree with the Arya Samaj principles. Maharaja Pratapsinh has been fighting the war in France since its beginning. He and I went to England by a steamer for the coronation ceremony of the King. He explained to me all these principles during the voyage. Years later, I met Pandit Atmaramji. After that I have become an Arya Samaj follower. The present Coochbehar Maharaja is an Arya Samaj follower. Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj came into existence only to throw away the yoke of the tyrannical priests. Forming unions to resist the tyranny of the capitalist is important, but more important is to throw away the spurious religious yoke. That's why I admire Arya Samaj. But the fake religious people oppose Arya Samaj. Arya Samaj holds that warriors like Lord Kitchner and Lord French are Aryan Kshatriyas. They can become Arya Dharma followers. Thus Arya Samaj is a link uniting us with the British nation. A good example of this is Maharaja Pratapsinh.

I hope that the rift between Brahmins and non-Brahmins is bridged and all unite soon. But as long as such exclusive organizations are run to the exclusion of others, we will have to run our separate institutions. In such circumstances, our rule to admit only non-Brahmins cannot be held as objectionable. The caste division we have can be found nowhere else in the world. No country has an independent priestly caste. We too did not have it in the days of the Vedas. It was created in recent times. This has concentrated all power into the hands of a few and formed an oligarchy. This is no help for the majority community. Its interests and development are ignored. The way out is self-dependence. I am glad to accept the presidentship of the organisation you have formed.

The world war has ended. The allies have won. We are here to celebrate the victory. Let me say something about it.

India has played a big role in the war. It helped the Imperial government in all possible ways. Soldiers fought on battlegrounds and displayed their valour. Our Maratha heroes fought brilliantly. War is the dharma of Kshatriyas.... The heroes who live by their true religion are the ones who follow Dharma correctly. Remember that they are the purest. When these brethren (soldiers) return, let us become purer ourselves by felicitating them. Let us not even think of ordering them a penance on the pretext of protecting religion. The idea of making them drink the impure *teerth* offered by Brahmins must not touch our mind. Brahmins and Vaishyas, who are advanced but reluctant to fight wars, must be ashamed of themselves after reading the saga of valour of the lakhs of Kshatriyas,

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who are considered Shudras, on the battlefields of Mesopotamia. And we don't know how to describe people who emulate these Brahmins, refuse to fight wars, keep on misleading people and creating hurdles for the government. Our Kshatriyas, who are now held to be Shudras, have displayed their valour on the fields of battle. We must congratulate them. The level of these warriors is higher than the people who are Kshatriya only by virtue of birth. I thank them all on our behalf. I pity selfish people who try to deny these people and their community the right to elect their representative to the council. Although selfish people do not wish to concede the just rights of others, I am sure in the courts of the Almighty and the godly King George, this is accepted. I am certain that they will rescue majority Kshatriyas and Shudras from the tyrannical rule of the oligarchy of the advanced castes and accord them their legitimate rights. Only those who are prepared to lay down their life for the country and the king deserve to be granted political rights.

While everywhere else the wind of democracy is blowing, it is not possible to expect Kshatriyas and Shudras to bow before religious tyranny. If you now listen to my friends Vhora and Kothari and our leader here, you will benefit greatly. Vhora and Kothari are running a newspaper for your welfare at a considerable loss to themselves. We must learn from them and support them. My dear teacher Lord Sydenham and his disciples are helping us to throw away the burden of oligarchy that we are carrying from ancient times. If they don't succeed, the valour shown in the war will not benefit us, we will be crushed under the tyranny of the oligarchy. We will not be able to reform ourselves until we cannot throw the yoke.

The current war was launched by Germany to increase its political power. It ended with the destruction of the German monarchy and his rise of the people's power. There is a similar war being fought in our society. The only difference is that this is a bloodless war. There is a kind of 'bureaucracy' here motivated by the desire to acquire all political rights so that it can continue to dominate all castes in religious and social fields. The majority community, which wants liberation from it and seeks all human rights, is illiterate and ignorant. Many great men are working for the emancipation of the majority community. Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Satyashodhak Samaj and other institutions are propagating the principle of equality. They tell people that all being the children of one God, it would be sin to discriminate between man and man on the basis of birth. They are making the majority aware of its rights. Such conflicts are common in every country. They continue in many countries. Here too, it is not new. A conflict of this nature is indicative of a living nation. I have already told you what arms we should use in this battle.

Unity, mutual love, mutual trust and perseverance must be our tools. I have already told you about the ongoing conflict between the capitalists and the pro-labour parties. The effect of the war will be to hand over the power to the pro-labour party. Russia and Germany were two big centers of despotic monarchies. They are now going to have democratic governments led by labour parties. In England too, the Labour Party is gaining in strength gradually. The neutral countries like Holland too will not remain unaffected in this tidal wave. When every adult gets the right to vote, it will mean the rule will be in accordance with the wishes of the

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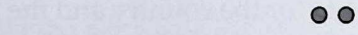
majority community. The power enjoyed by the minorities will be reduced. This is inevitable. We too must get similar rights. We must fight selflessly to obtain them.

We are illiterate and ignorant. We must get used to working with a method. For that we must treat our cooperative credit societies into schools and start learning... If we adopt such useful principles and nurture them, we will become strong enough to earn our rights.

We must have labour unions like in England. Everyone must be aware of one's rights. People with Brahmin and Vaishya tendencies dominate the capitalists. So the labour class won't prosper without gaining control over the capitalists. There is nothing shameful in the word labour. Although I occupy the royal throne of Kolhapur, I am proud to call myself a soldier, farmer or a labourer. My mother is from Ghorpade family. My adoptive mother is from Shirke family, and my adoptive father from Bhosale family. All of them are farmers. Many people are under the impression that it is not good to keep the company of the lowly, illiterate people. I was also advised that way. But such teachings did not affect me because love and affection for them was in-born in me as my families have grown with them. The blood of soldiers and farmers is running through my veins. So it is great joy for me to be with them. A great English holy man has said: Virtues are found more in the hut of a poor person than in palaces. My experience is identical. I see integrity, brotherhood, nationalism, loyalty to the king and absence of jealousy and many such virtues in you. That's why I have great respect for you. I want you to consider me as one among you.

We and the people who are appropriating our rights should both learn our lessons from the war. Let us thank God for the complete victory of the Allies in the war and congratulate the souvereign government.



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5.

Arya Dharma will Promote Equality and National Unity

Arya Samaj's XI convention was held at Navsari in Gujarat on December 14, 1918. Shahu in his presidential address, enumerates the fall of the Brahmin community and analyses the efforts made by Swami Dayanand, Babu Keshavchandra Sen and Mahatma Jotirao Phule to pull the majority community out of the morass. He lauds the Arya Dharma for trying to establish a society of equality by giving the right of Vedas to non-Brahmins. He also calls for supprting the concept of one-world, one-family on the backdrop of a united world after the war.

My Aryan Brothers,

I am thankful for being honoured with invitation to preside over the XI convention of Arya Dharma and deliver the introductory speech. I have not done much work for Arya Samaj. But your appreciation of whatever little I have done has doubled my enthusiasm. I hope to work on a bigger scale from now on. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve Arya Samaj as the president of its convention. I request you all to accept my services to the cause. And let us all thank God Almighty for the total success of the Imperial Government in the World War, for the victory of the justice and for averting the impending danger to the land of the Aryans.

The principles of equality on which our Arya Dharma has been founded have now been universally accepted because of the war. I shall talk more about it later. Maharshi Dayanand and My Guru, Swami Veerajanand have lit the flame of knowledge in the Land of Aryans. It indicates some divine plans. The religious situation in the country has deteriorated beyond limits. Because of the many layers (of misinterpretation) on the authentic Arya Dharma as propagated by the Vedas, its pure form cannot be perceived. The interpretation of the ancient treatises written by seers with the aid of commentaries and critiques by fake and dishonest Brahmin priests has confounded the situation. Idol worship of the low type, which encouraged the mean vices of the people, got undue predominance. The worshippers began to call themselves pure. The essence of Brahminism, which depended on quality and

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accomplishments, became just a caste by birth. The imaginary greatness of pilgrim places was pounded upon the mass mind. That brought the Brahmins abundance of delicious food and money. They began to get lazier. They succumbed to addictions. And they were no more inclined to studies and knowledge. Treatises were written on the unending rituals to be performed and fees to be given to Brahmins on innumerable occasions from birth to death. They even prepared treatises like *Garud Puran* to squeeze money out of people in the name of sending food and luxuries to the dead on the occasion of death anniversaries.

The people who called themselves Brahmins enjoyed life at the cost of the ignorant. The knowledge they had was on the wane. The Brahmins banned education for the non-Brahmins to ensure that they and their progeny enjoy the good life. Then they spread astrology and exploited the gullible by threatening them with the devilish effects of a particular planet. They said this day was good, that one bad, travel only on this day and not that, perform major events like marriages and thread ceremonies only on auspicious day. With all such crazy frauds, they established their grip over the society. The situation worsened so much that East was the direction to which the priest pointed and moonless day was the one priest said it was. Non-Brahmins began to believe that their dharma was to follow what the priest ordained and that alone will please God. People came to a stage when they were no better than cattle.

The country suffered greatly because of the denial of education to the majority community. The caste system was created on the basis of talent and performance. And the basis must remain the same. But a Brahmin was supposed to be a Brahmin by birth and naturally all others came to have castes because of their birth. This led to caste discrimination. The original four castes have now led to at least 4000 castes. This has resulted in disorganization of society. Discrimination created animosity and the unity of the country has suffered. The effect did not remain confined to decline on the religious front. Aliens began to attack Aryawarta and the enemy prospered because of the division within the country. That led to a near permanent state of slavery. As learning and knowledge declined, trade, and arts and crafts declined. The country was in doldrums. The Rajputs tried hard and long to free us from the alien rule. But it is no surprise that their efforts failed because society was so debilitated from within. Marathas made the second major and more successful attempt. At one time it was felt that they would conquer the entire country. But the Maratha power gradually passed into the hands of Brahmins. The Brahmin-non-Brahmin conflict intensified and the Maratha power was destroyed. That brought in the British who render equal justice to all and realise that the ruler's first duty is to educate the subjects.

Many missionaries came to India after the establishment of the British rule. They started educating people in English and also preaching their religion. The British government too established a department of education and started disseminating new ideas among the people. During the present times, we have seen three major religious reformers -Maharshi Dayanand, Babu Keshavchandra Sen and Jotirao Phule. The three have remarkable similarities. But they have different views and different programmes for their

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followers. They have become different because of the circumstances they lived in as also the education they got.

Maharshi Dayanand is from our Gujarat province. It is natural for us to be proud of him. He was educated mainly in north India. Swami Veerajanand is also from that region. It is but natural that the two have been influenced by the prevailing situation in that region. Babu Keshavchandra Sen is from Bengal. The British rule began from Bengal so the spread of English education is maximum there. That is why Keshavchandra exhibits the influence of the Unitarian Church of the West.

The circumstances in which Jotirao Phule grew up in Maharashtra was far different. He was from among the non-Brahmins. He had no right to get educated according to the Brahminical ideas. So most of his religious knowledge came from the books written by Christian missionaries as also the imaginary religious do's and don'ts written by Brahmins for the non-Brahmin majority community. But being a thoughtful and inquisitive person, Phule soon recognised the Brahmin game. Swami Dayanand had free access to Vedas and the Sanskrit treasury of knowledge. He had clearly grasped the high principles of the Aryadharma. It will be no exaggeration to say that no other Indian was more aware of the fact that Aryadharma was greater than all other religions. Thus the three were educated differently and were the products of different social situations.

Like in the south, in north India too Brahminness depends on birth. But there they believe in the existence of the four *Varnas* of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. They believe that some people other than Brahmins too have the right to study Vedas and other areas. In the south, the non-Brahmin community has almost no knowledge of the Vedas. And it has not much knowledge in any other field as well. In the north, the Brahmins dominate mainly in the matters of religion. In other fields, non-Brahmins are not dependent, so the social equation is balanced. In the south, non-Brahmins learn nothing, so Brahmins are dominant in every field. They dominate religious, political, social and educational fields. As a result, the plight of the non-Brahmin community is pitiable. Efforts were often made to break this 'bureaucracy.' But the dependence of the non-Brahmin community cannot end without directly attacking the religious hegemony of the Brahmins. Realising this, Jotirao Phule has started attacking the weak points of the Brahmin power. Satyashodhak Jotirao's main view is that there is no need of an agent between God and man. He started advising people to perform their religious rituals themselves without the Brahmin middlemen. The majority has lived in slavish dependence on Brahmins for ages and has become ignorant as a result. So the work of the Satyashodhak Samaj often faces difficulties. But reformers always have to face and overcome such difficulties.

Swami Dayanandji propounds that every human being has the right to the Vedas. He has spread the knowledge of the Vedas in the north. Lakhs of people joined the Arya Samaj and established gurukuls, schools, colleges and girls' colleges. His view that everyone has a right to learn the Vedas has helped convince the people of the essential equality of human community. The level of life in general went up by a few notches and it can continue to rise higher. The views of Swami Dayanand spread in the North quite fast

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but they are facing a lot of resistance in the South.

The reason for this is the might of the "Brahmin bureaucracy" I have talked about. When Swamiji was in Pune, "Brahmin bureaucracy" heard his thoughtful discourses and realised that the Arya Samaj view was a poison for them. It then thought of as mean a trick as taking out a procession of a donkey "Gardabhanand" Saraswati to oppose the procession of Swamiji. The Brahmins are lost in idol worship. What else can they think of? By bringing the idol of an ass in front of Swamiji, they made everyone realise what the true state of society was and what they are really worth. Jotirao Phule and his followers have realised that sweet words and pointed arguments are lost on the Brahmins; they have to be spoken to in their own language in a tit for tat manner. If true religion and religious studies are to enter this southern land, organisations like the Satyashodhak Samaj must prepare the people for that. They have to root out the weeds and break down the rocky soil so that the seed of the Arya Dharma grows to the happiness of all. Brahmadharma (Brahmo Samaj) does not have any one treatise as its only scripture. Its principles have been gleaned from the best of all religions like the honey-sucking bee. But not all people have the intelligence to understand them enough to agree with them. So its spread on a big scale is not very likely. The solid base of the Arya Samaj is the Vedas. There is no treatise as old as the Vedas. Almost everyone in *Aryawart* agrees on the authority of the Vedas. Almost everyone worships the Vedas. All wish that they should have the right to learn the Vedas. And so the views in the Vedas spread. They will no doubt keep spreading in *Aryawart* on a large scale.

Aryawart was never a single nation. As the present British rule extends over this entire continent, the spirit of a united country has been growing. The Arya Samaj's contribution to the strengthening of this feeling is praiseworthy. Arya Samaj assimilates every person from this country, be he of any caste or creed, into itself. It even accepts non-Aryans into its fold and accords them all the rights of Aryans, like inter-marriage and eating together. Scholars are agreed that Teutons from Europe and America are Aryans. So Arya Samaj has no hesitation in accepting them. In ancient times, all Aryan groups were living together in areas near the North Pole. Later they had to migrate and various groups left in different directions. Those who went westwords now form the strong European nations. We are the descendants of the Aryans who went eastwords. So Europeans and their descendent Americans are no aliens to us. Great warriors from the West like Lord Kitchner and General French have proved their valour by their glorious fights. In our view, they are Kshatriyas. If they are willing, we can initiate them into Aryadharma. After living apart for thousands of years, naturally big differences have evolved between our ways of thinking and action. But our fundamental principles are the same. They have no caste distinctions. Our true religion too does not accept them. Only the spurious Brahminical Hinduism gives importance to "touch" and thus spreads animosity among the castes. Aryadharma facilitates cohesiveness. It will help to unite various castes, creeds and religions.

The principle of equality has gained ground in Europe, America and Japan. There we find brothers, man and wife from the same family belonging to different religions. In the same way it would not be

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impossible to find an Aryasamaji husband having wife following a different religion or vice-versa and still the two leading a very harmonious life. Everyone must have complete individual freedom. Arya Samaj is giving this to its followers. Brahminical Hinduism opposes this. So people will get disillusioned with it while Arydharma will unite us all. But we must not be constrained by the idea of one nation alone. During the recent World War, nations took to war because of their patriotism. But now great thinkers there are thinking of forming a 'society of nations.' Aryadharma has also similar capabilities. However, it will be wrong for us to think of spreading Aryadharma everywhere.

Realising the importance of Aryadharma, Sisodiya dynasty's Maharana Sajjansinh of Udepur and Maharaja Pratapsinh of Jodhpur have been trying hard to spread its tenets. Anyone who wants this country to do well should contribute in this work. The importance of the spurious Brahminical religion is being impressed upon the ignorant from time to time by describing it as the eternal religion. The eternal principles have been enunciated by the Vedas. They are very good. But these cunning people have kept them hidden from the masses and added their own ideas in the *Puranas* and the *Smrities*. They have encouraged immorality in treatises like the *Puranas* and *Bharat* to facilitate an easy luxurious life for themselves and the people of their caste. We should be ashamed of saying that these are our scriptures. These treatises or at least the immoral parts in them have nothing to do with *Rishis*. We are becoming aware of these things because in the English era, the doors of knowledge have been opened for us. We ought to condemn them strongly.

I have already told you how pitiable is the social and religious situation in southern India. I will tell you how in my own case Brahmins tried to divide my caste. They told me that as a king, I am Vishnu's part. So I am a Kshatriya. So we are ready to perform all Vedic rituals for you. Thus the cunning Brahmins tried to divide me and the people of my caste. They are also trying similarly to sow the seeds of strife among Marathas by saying that some of them are better and higher and others lesser and lower. This makes it necessary that the Arya Samaj should concentrate on this region and make special efforts to spread its views. There is a plethora of spurious religious gurus at places like Nashik and Pandharpur. We must open our schools, gurukuls and temples there so that knowledge of the true religion spreads among all.

It is good that we are going to pass a resolution in this convention in support of the bill being introduced by Hon. Patel in the Indian Legislative Council. Casteism has divided society by blocking marriages among different sections of society. I have just talked about how useful is the work of Arya Samaj in uniting the country. The bill being introduced by Hon. Patel will help the same cause.

Unless marriages build bridges among different castes, the severity of caste discrimination will not be reduced. The Brahmin community in all provinces is coming forward to oppose this bill. Their object is clear. All their effort is directed towards prolonging the dominance of their spurious religion for as long as they can. Almost all non-Brahmin sections favour this bill. They are holding meetings at various places and passing resolutions in favour of the bill. Hon. Bhupendranath

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Basu had introduced a similar bill earlier. However these selfish people with vested interests had raised a hue and cry over it and argued that the bill would mean end of the religion. Laws on the lines of this bill are already in force in principalities like Indore, Baroda and Kolhapur, where Aryadharma has been promoted. But there is no sign of the religion being anyway affected in any of these principalities. But it is clear that if religion means the fee of the priests, it will be affected. If that fee is abolished completely, the country will be better off.

I thank you again for having listened to my speech patiently. I end my speech by praying to God that the Aryadharma principles spread everywhere, the country becomes prosperous for all time to come and there is peace and joy everywhere in the world.

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6

The Era of Knowledge !

The XIIIth All India Conference of Kurmi Kshatriyas was held in Kanpur, on 19th April 1919. Shahu presided over the Conference and addressed it with the following speech. Here Shahu makes a sociological and political analysis of the caste system prevailing within the Hindu society. He categorically states that the peaceful British regime, English education and Religious reforms carried out by reformers like Maharshi Dayanand are the three factors which have brought about the current social awareness (in India). He also emphasises that the present era is the era of knowledge and of self-improvement through knowledge., Shahu was awarded the title of "Rajarshi" in this conference.

My dear Kshatriya Brothers,

I am one of you. Call me a labourer or a peasant; my ancestors were peasants. I am extremely glad that I am invited to preside over the people who carry out the same profession as my ancestors.

I am neither more knowledegable nor more deserving. There are many people more intelligent than me. You have bestowed a great honour upon me by making me the President, may be because I am a peasant and I belong to the noble house of Great Warrior Shivaji Maharaja and his daughter-in-law the valourous Queen Tarabai and not because of my abilities. When your wish was conveyed to me, I was ill with fever in Mumbai. Thanks to well wishers like you, I recovered quickly. But I faced a great difficulty, an insurmountable difficulty of making a speech in Hindi. Studying Hindi for three days in the train, I decided to make the speech in Hindi. Hindi is not my mother tongue. Also the script is unfamiliar, so Hon'ble Swami Paramanand will read out my speech to you. I *am* doubly glad that, Hon'ble Khaserao Jadhav, who is related to me, who is almost like a father to me and whom I consider my Guru has come all the way here. I pray God that I get strength to serve you. I am ready to serve you in future as per your wishes.

I shall also speak about one more subject. This is not the place to speak about it, but one cannot ignore what is going on around. The conflict that is going on these days is not to my liking at all. This conflict would not

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have arisen, had not the British government given us education. The government should give us knowledge and we should return this poison to the government, is n't. it contradictory? Those who gave us knowledge, will definitely release us from the shackles of slavery. I am sure of that. Like a child asking something to his parents, ask the things you need to the government, lovingly and insistently; the government will definitely oblige. I sincerely believe that things change with love, never with force.

It is very good that there are signs of development in every region of India. Day by day the number of organizations based on caste and religion is increasing. I take it as a positive sign and I sincerely wish them well because several altruistic schemes like education, social reforms, spread of religion etc. were being carried out by them and are being carried out even today. If in future they aim just as high, I hope they will prosper. If one enquires into the reasons of this awareness, the following three important reasons can be pinpointed: first and foremost is the peaceful British regime, second is English education and the third is religious reforms by religious leaders. The Indians should never disregard this favour rendered to them by the just British government and they should always show loyalty to the government. Also do not forget the religious leaders, especially those like Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, who have given religious freedom to our people.

English education has granted a 'Third Eye' to the Indians. This is a great boon. Because of this boon we are able to understand who were we, what was our position in the past, what is our position today and what it will be in the future. This is a very fortunate circumstance. I sincerely empathise with those who try to carry out reforms and changes in the country, caste, religion, and society in India. I like to associate myself with this cause and that's why I have come here today. I shall go to the main topic directly. The country where we live is called *Aryavarta*. It is called Aryavarta, because the Aryans were the first settlers of this country. The Aryans originated from Tibet (Trishtit, Tibbat). There were two Varnas of Aryans: the Aryavarna and the Dasyuvarna. Both were born of the same stock.

The people belonging to the Dasyuvarna could become Aryavarnas by following the Arya qualities. While the Aryas could become Dasyus by following the Dasyu qualities. As the society became more complex, four varnas were formed in order to carry out various social functions. The word Varna is defined as follows in the Nirukta : *varno vrnoti* (Varna can be attained) Hence a man can acquire a Varna by acquiring the qualities typical of the Varna. Also Varna can be changed. That is why it is called Varna. 'Nirukta' : ed. 2, vol. 3).

"By following the Dharma persons belonging to the lower Varna can attain higher Varna. Similarly a person belonging to the higher Varna is liable to go to the lower Varna if he does not abide by Dharma. This is so from Vedic times to the Mahabharat times."

"Throughly understanding and studying the Vedas, teaching others, carrying out fire sacrifices and helping others carrying out fire sacrifices, giving and accepting donations are duties meant for Brahmin."

" Peace of mind, restraint, penitence, internal and external cleanliness, ability to

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forgive, simplicity, knowledge and science (knowledge about God, living beings and Nature), faith in God, are also the duties of a Brahmin."

" Protecting the subjects, donating for their benefit their, carrying out fire worship, studying the Vedas, fighting wars, living without fear, being bold, being a clever strategist, not seeking hedonistic pleasures, being careful, not retreating from a battle field, sacrificing one's self in order to protect the people and believing in God, these are the duties of a Kshatriya."

"Breeding and looking after cattle, giving donations, carrying out fire sacrifice etc., studying the Vedas, trading, including foreign trade, banking and agriculture, these are the duties of a Vaishya."

"Acquiring artistic skills and serving Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas to fulfil their duties is Sudra's lot." (Manu)

In Vedic times people were categorized into Varnas based on the duties carried out by them. Men as well as women had the right to study the Vedas. The Vedic Rishis belonged to different social classes. So long as women knew scriptures, Aryavarta was akin to heaven. Voicing such imaginary Srutis as "Women and Sudras should not read Vedas" was forbidden. If the Sudras heard Vedic recitation, molten lead was not poured into their ears. But as the Varna system became hereditory, it became difficult for people to carry out duties allotted to different Varnas freely and people gradually stopped fulfilling the duties ascribed to their Varna. The Social structure weakened. At last the system that was based on attributes became hereditory. In order that nobody should dare protest, rules were invented and incorporated into the Smritis.

Today the Varna system is based on birth, if the parents are Brahmins, the offspring is entitled to be called a Brahmin. Nobody else can be a Brahmin. Similarly if one's parents are Kshatriya, he becomes a Kshatriya. He may or may not have the attributes of a Kshatriya. A child born to Vaishya parents is aVaishya and that born to Sudra parents is a Sudra, even if he has better attributes. The old Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas becoming what they are by their attributes, started showing pride in their birth and it became difficult for any new person to enter the first three Varnas. Any person studying History is aware of the harm caused by this system to the Hindu society. During this period five thousand castes emmerged from the four Varnas. As a result the social strength of Hindus declined. Each caste does not share bread with any other caste nor does it welcome marriages with persons from other castes. If one caste is fecing opression, the other castes just watch mutely, they don't have sympathy for the sufferers. Actually human beings is one caste. The Law givers have described this caste as follows : "Those who have the same qualities, same shape and same type of reproduction belong to the same caste. Similarly even in the Grammar it is written that those who have similar body can said to be belonging to the same group eg. Man, cow, horse, elephant, Pipal tree etc."

Hindus think that Varna system does not exist anywhere else in the world. This is a misconception. Historically, the world has had hierarchical systems. There exists Varna system in other countries also. The difference between their system and our system is that, in other countries the Varna system is based on one's attributes, while in our country it is hereditory. There one can change one's Varna in one's lifetime.

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But here Varna never changes. All this is because of centuries of practice. The Vedas and other scriptures give contrary evidence. It is written in the Manusmriti "Kshatriyas loose their Varna and become Shudras when they ignore the sacred thread Samskara."

Manusmriti further says, "Poundra, Choundra, Dravid, Kamboj, Yavan, Shaka, Parad, Palhav, Cheena, Kirat, Dad etc. became Shudras because they did not follow their duties as mentioned above. They came to be known as different castes in different places. Some of them spoke *Mlenchchha*, while others spoke Aryan languages. All of them were called Dasyus. "

Not only because of non conformity to rituals by certain Varnas but also because of ignorence and exploitative behaviour of Brahmins that a caste called as Mlenchhas came into being.

The fourth chapter of Vishnu Puran tells us about a king from the Trishanku lineage called Bahu. He was defeated by Kshatriyas like Haihya, Taal, Jangha etc. He started living in the forest with his queen. Later when he died, his queen wanted to commit *sati*. But she was prevented from doing so by a sage as she was pregnant. The sage prophesied that a great warrior shall be born to her who'll destroy the Kshatriyas. The queen did not commit *sati* and started living in the sage's *ashrama*. That sage was called Vasishtha. A son was born to the queen. He was called Sagar. The sage taught him warrior's craft. On growing up Sagar came to know his mother's history. So he fought and defeated Kshatriyas. All the Kshatriyas went to sage Vasishtha. Then Vasishtha said to Sagar," Son, do not kill these Kshatriyas. I have taken away their twice born status and banned them from Dharma. I have killed them even as they live. They are now living corpses." Sagar then transformed these Kshatriya races. He cut their shikhas and called them "yavanas". He also took away their rights to study Vedas and other scriptures. They were forbidden from the Kshatriya Dharma. Similarly because of the terrible acts by Parashuram several Kshatriyas left Kshatriya Varna and formed themselves into different castes.

Thousands of castes came into being in this fashion in our country. Your caste also must have got separated from the Kshatriya Varna in the course of history. Historically, the world has changed in this fashion several times; it is still changing and will change in future. This is a Law of Nature. Till Mahabharata times Kshatriyas of this country married to Kshatriyas from other countries. This can easily be seen from examples in Mahabharata like Arjuna's marriage to Ulupi, Dhritarashtra's marriage to Gandhari etc. History speaks of many such marriages even before Mahabharata times.

Now I would like to tell you a few things on the current issue. If you want to embrace Kshatriya Dharma wholeheartedly, I welcome you with all my heart. You have become Kshatriyas. Try and aquire the attributes of Kshatriya Varna. Be ready to protect the poor people of our country. We have every sanction of the Vedas to become Kshatriya. God has given us means to realize it.The nation will improve only if everybody aquires the attributes of all the Varnas. We also must remember, that this is an era of knowledge. Knowledge has enlightened all minds. Nobody will respect you, if you are a Brahmin or a Kshatriya by birth alone. Be Kshatriyas by qualities. Don't just add your names to the list of Kshatriyas by birth.

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Don't argue, that we are Kshatriyas , we were born into such and such lineage. This is not the best way to progress. Don't care what the census report officers or anybody else says about you. Try and spread *Vedokta Samskara, Vedokta Karma* and good deeds in your caste. Educate your children, help the poor and the destitute.

I am glad to note that there is a custom of widow remarriage amongst Kurmis. I believe that your Kshatriya caste will be free of such sins as infanticide and extra marital sexual relations. This is natural in calamities. This helps keep the human society healthy. The Vedas back it. My government has also passed an act on widow remarriage. Those castes that don't follow this practice have to face calamities like infanticide, extra marital relations etc. It's a sad story that thousands of children are dying every year in this manner!

Indians think that there are three ways of development viz: *purdah,* marriages only within the caste and not sharing bread with people of different castes.

But then isn't it surprising that Kshatriya women like Maharani Tarabai, the founder of Kolhapur dynasty, Maharani Ahilyabai, the queen of Zhansi Laxmibai, Maharani Kamalabai have successfully run the state and also fought the enemy on the battlefield. Had they observed *purdah,* all this would have been impossible. Even today the practice *of purdah* is not prevailent in all the regions. There is no *purdah* in Maharashtra, Madras, Gujrat etc. In some other regions only a few castes observe *purdah.* Qualities among women like bravery are totally destroyed because of *purdah.* I am extremely glad to know that agriculture is the main consideration for marriages among you people. So great, so pure is agriculture, that during *Vedic* period even a *Cakravarti* Raja and his ministers would till the land at least once a year for the development of agriculture. Tilling of the land which by sowing a single grain, reaps thousands of grains and feeds the multitude of humanity, is in my opinion not at all a bad or ignoble deed. I had sent my son abroad and to Allahabad Agricultural School to study Agriculture. As you know, Agriculture brings about dual progress. You are happy and you make others happy. Agriculture is also connected with Animal husbandry and protection. With this aim a lot of work is to be done in the area of animal husbandry also. Our country should be rich in milk and butter.

Engaging in agriculture does not hinder your being Kshatriya in any way. I do not agree that people engaged in occupations bringing prosperity to the society are inferior in any way.

In Europe agriculturists are considered cultured people. Agriculturists are on high posts in government jobs too. Also artisans enjoy considerable prestige there. No one can say that a shoemaker or a sweeper is inferior. However educated people in India do not turn to such jobs, thinking that they will be called *Sudras.* Wealth cannot be created in this fashion. How can a nation develop without wealth?

God Almighty! Let the people in my country be wise, let their hearts be lit by knowledge. Let us all live together in fraternity. Let us share each others sorrows and joys. Let us all develop physically, spiritually and socially and make this world a heaven on the earth. Lastly, I would like to thank the Kurmi Kshatriyas and pray God for fulfillment of your wishes and prosperity to your community.

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7

Aryadharma will Embrace the World !

All India Aryadharma Conference, (Arya Samaj) was held at Bhavnagar, Saurashtra, on 8th March 1920. In the concluding session of the Conference the following speech was given by Rajarshi Shahu. Here, Shahu lays emphasis on greatness of Swami Dayananda Saraswati's life and works and expresses belief that Vedic Dharma founded by him would be the most appropriate means to energize the nation. Shahu also publicly declares that "I accepted the Vedic Dharma in the belief that it is far more significant than other faiths". He expresses the hope that this Vedic Dharma expounded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati will in future conquer the world.

Gentlemen!

Let's throw a glance at the history of India. There is an enormous difference between the India a millenium ago and India today. Qualities like bravery, wisdom, religiosity, generosity have now disappeared. We have even stopped being amazed at the malpractices that snare India today. The society has become lifeless because of the malpractices like child marriages, polygamy, alchoholism, lack of education among women, caste system etc.

Let's take the example of caste system. The condition of people belonging to castes other than Brahmins is deplorable in the whole of India, especially in Maharashtra. These castes are denied the chance to develop and progress. Today, in the twentieth century , there are people that are considered untouchable. That they were not born in a particular caste, is their only fault. One does not find unity, love and cooperation in the whole of India. Our own foolishness is the cause of this. At present there are such people in India who cannot tolerate even a shadow of their fellow-brother falling on their bodies. These people consider themselves superior and are deeply immersed in the false vanity of their so-called superior birth and are perpetrating injustices on the so-called inferior people.

The Vedic ideal was to ascribe higher or lower Varna to a person, depending upon his ability. The ancient sages propogated this. But in *Puranic* times Brahmins started interpreting it as "Brahmans are born to Brahmins". They wrote books to that effect. 'स्त्रीशूद्रौ नाधीयताम्' (no knowledge

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to women and Sudras almost became a sacred hymn. As a result women and Sudras did not have access to knowledge. This situation prevailed for a long time and hence Sudras thought themselves to be untouchables. The Brahmins benefitted from this and Brahminhood became monopoly of Brahmins born to Brahmins.

Actually a Brahmin's life is not supposed to be worldly. But ever since the critical criteria for superior or inferior stopped being applied, the so called "Gurus" started enjoying life.They are exploiting every occasion, right from birth to death and even after a person dies, they have created events like *Shraddha.*

Gentlemen! When Brahmins at the helm of the affairs of the state were selfish, the anti- Vedic hymn of "अष्टवर्षा भवेत् गौरी" (when girl is eight years old) prevailed and the national identity was in a crisis. In those difficult times Maharshi Dayananda was born in a village called Bhauravi, near the same Bhavnagar, where the present conference is being held. He was destined to rouse not only his nation but also the entire world. He completed penance, read the Vedas observed the situation prevailing in current India and unselfishly jumped into the fire of discord and disagreement raging in India. He showed the right path to the lost children of the ancient *Rishis.* He was abused, hated and even subjected to violence. But disregarding these difficulties the great, unselfish sage, Maharishi Dayananda upheld the Vedic Dharma. The so called Brahmins were jelous. They tried very hard to stop Dayananda. But can anyone ever stop a motion preordained by the Divine? His ten years of preaching saw a rising in Panjab, Samyukta Pranta, Rajputana, Bangal, Bihar etc. He had thousands of followers. Today in the entire North India, nay in the whole of India, instead of the anti- Vedic hymns the Vedic hymn

"ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या वा युवानं विंदते पतिम्, शूद्रे ब्राह्मणतामति ब्राह्मणो यति शूद्रताम्" prevails.

The activities of the Arya Samaj are well known to the world. By demolishing the tabboo of untouchability they have helped a lot at the time of war. Earlier foreign travel was considered polluting now it is desirable. Aryadharma is for the entire mankind. I am happy to note that several Europeans have accepted and are accepting the Aryadharma. Actually speaking Lord Kitchener, Sir Hague, Lord French etc. could be considered as Aryas, because these warriors have fulfilled the Kshatradharma admirably. In my opinion Aryadharma is the only faith which is trying to bind the rulers and the ruled together in the bonds of love. I am confident that this Aryadharma will conquer the world. It is a matter of great pride that kings like Pratapsinh, Sajjansinh are the followers of this faith. We should also follow them. I am glad to note that though there are some selfish people throwing tantrums, we have garnered the support of the real Brahmins and the educated people. But still a lot of things remain to be done in the South. Generating a sense of brotherhood in this country is the duty of the Aryas.

Though societies like the "Satyashodhak Samaj" have brought about some changes, they will not be able to make a major breakthrough, because they seem to be operating on the principle of Tit for Tat. The best medicine to cure the ills of the nation is the Vedic Dharma. The Hindus in the heart of their hearts are proud of the Vedas, and the Arya Samaj

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favours the Vedas. The Aryadharma is that of a service to the society.

Gentlemen! I follow this faith because I realize that Vedic Dharma is more important than other faiths.

I am handing over the institutions like Rajaram college, Highschool, Gurukul, Orphanage, Sardar Boarding to the Arya Prasarak Sabha of the Samyukta Pranta, with the sole aim of mental development of the people. This development is possible only through knowledge hence I am handing this key of knowledge over to the Arya Samaj. I have done everything I could. It is my heartfelt desire that you should start Highschools, Gurukuls, societies in areas like Pandharpur, Jotiba etc. I have fulfilled my duties. Now everything is in your hands. Now if Vedic Dharma doesn't spread in spite of all this, the fault will be entirely yours and that of the Arya Prasarak. I wish some true activist spends time for me too.

Arya brethren! Inactivity has not yet disappeared from amongst us. The Sage's inspiration seems to be working amongst the educated classes. All the Societies, Councils are fulfilling their duties following the Vedic precepts, "यथेमां वाचं कल्याणिम्", following this precept, Arya Samaj has started Gurukuls, Orphanages, Schools, Colleges and spread the Vedic knowledge amongst all the castes without discrimination. But we are still far away from the Sage's ideal. This is not the time of inaction. We need action. Take the example of Patel Bill. We should follow it. Time has come to prove that we are following the Varna system based on the qualities and abilities as prescribed by the Vedas.

I have taken a lot of your time. But you listened to my speech carefully and enthusiastically. For this I sincerely thank you. I also request you that if the Sage Dayananda's life has brought about some change in your heart, then like the Bal Moolshankar of Kathewad who took a terrible oath and left his home, please take the oath that you will not shirk the task of following and spreading the Vedic precepts. Brothers! Remember that truth always prevails. Keep this in mind and try to spread "Rishi's Mission". God will give you strength because He helps activists like you.

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8.

Let your Leader be from Your Caste!

All Maharashtra Conference of the untouchables was held at Mangaon near Kolhapur on 22nd March 1920. Young leader of untouchables Dr. Ambedkar presided over the conference while Shahu Chhatrapati was the chief guest. Here Shahu explains what made him abolish the age old practice of Hajeri (i.e., compulsory attendance at police stations or before government authorities by certain castes' or tribes' persons) that was unjust to the untouchables and that he would go further and declare soon abolitions of bonded labour. According to him, the untouchables should choose their leader from amongst their own caste, instead of following leaders belonging to other castes.He also praises Dr. Ambedkar with epithets like "Pandit" and "Jewel amongst the learned."

My friend Ambedkar is presiding over the conference today. I have purposely cancelled a hunting expedition in order to benefit from his speech. My heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Ambedkar for his news journal "Mookanayak", which advocates the cause of all the backward classes.

On this occasion I would like to tell you something about why I felt like abolishing the *Hajeri* system. Because of *Hajeri*, these poor people were being exploited by village workers and other officers. Even when the prevailing wage rate was twelve annas, officers would make them work for free, holding the *Hajeri* system over them and extract compliance. Once in a while they would give something just enough to feed them.

In the twentieth century this type of slavery prevails. Those falling under this system, could not meet their ailing relations. Sometimes the ailing relatives died without ever seeing their near ones. I have seen even ailing children die because their parents were forced to leave them and attend the work. What could be more cruel? On several occasions people of upper castes would make the *Balutedars* work and later refuse to pay. Nobody would complain for the fear of *Hajeri*.

While constructing houses for the upper caste people like Patil, Kulkarni etc. the contractors extract more than legitimate dues from people of the lower castes like poor Marathas, Suryavanshi, Somvanshi and others. Worst time for those under *Hajeri* is when there is some theft in the village.

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All their qualities are disregarded and they have to face enquiry and atrocities. From my experience I can say that number of people engaged in criminal activities from the *Hajeri* is less than those without *Hajeri*. The only thing ever achieved by *Hajeri* was branding of even innocent people which induced them towards crime. For them, there was no point in behaving honestly and circumspectly. They were always called upon to give *Hajeri*. So why be honest at all? This was the effect of *Hajeri* on their mindset. Since I abolished *Hajeri*, the number of crimes has come down. Everybody wants to behave honestly.

Fights amongst the Balutedars have ceased. The practice of appointing Talathi is still new but I have observed that confrontations and litigations in the villages have gone down.

But I could not, however, curb the system of Vethbigar (bonded labour). Because these people are after Watan. And how much is the Watan? Usually a bit of land or a shovel of grains. This is not enough for subsistance but enough to make them stick around. But then in order to subsist, they have no other option but to steal. Hence I requested all the Balutedars and Watandars like the Mahars that do not run after such meagre Watans. Just leave them. Divide your Mahar Watan in such a way that there is 10 acres piece of land per head. Let the income from this Watan be allotted to the seniormost Mahars, let there be say, only eight Mahars per village, appoint them like the *sanadi sheledars*. This will help overcome the slavery. I shall see to it that such new sanads are issued. So that the remaining Mahars are free to move out of the village or take up any other profession. In this way they all can survive and not go hungry. The Mahars from Karveer Mahal have accepted this and I am sure the rest will follow. I hope that my dear friend Mr. Ambedkar will help me in this.

In this endevour famous people like educated Mr. Keshavrao, and Rao Bahadur Babu Kalicharan, who devoted his life to the upliftment of Backward classes, would have helped me a great deal. I fully believe that even the Patils will render their cooperation and I shall be backed by the local businessman Rambhau Shirgaonkar.

When I abolished *Hajeri*, I was asked to furnish the information about the people under *Hajeri*, in case they left the territory of Kolhapur and went into the British territory. The Police Superintendant of Satara had made a written request on 30-05-1919 to this effect, to which I replied on 04-06-1919 expressing my regrets. Since I have abolished *Hajeri* completely, I cannot furnish such information. But I shall be glad to provide the criminal record of any person, touchable or untouchable. My conscience does not allow me to brand people as criminals if they are honest and law abiding. This is how I abolished *Hajeri*.

With respect to the Talathi system, some people say that if you don't want any Watandars in service, why do you need Patils? No! No! Never! There are several reasons why Patil is needed. Even an uneducated bumpkin will agree that there has to be a responsible officer in a village. If that is the case, then it has to be a Patil in my opinion. Because he is not an outsider like the Kulkarni Watandars. Patil's Watan has been granted by the Adilshah Sultan. They have founded villages. Also usually Patil of the village comes from the same caste as the majority in the village. Not like the Kulkarni, who rarely has people from his caste in the village. Kulkarni is backed

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by the officers, lawyers and bureaucrats belonging to his caste, hence people from the village are afraid of him. He is not bothered about the well-being of the village community. He usually obeys the bureaucracy and officers that support him, occasionally even at the cost of the poor villagers or ignoring their welfare. But with Patil it is different. Patil would behave in this fashion only as a last resort because he has to follow the wellbeing of the people of his caste that usually form the majority. But in case if there are two Patils in a village there are quarrels and fights that get encouraged by some selfish people. Crime rate in villages where there is only one Patil is remarkably low ; even our administrative officers can vouch for that.

Baburao Yadav has brought out a booklet recording the humble efforts that I have undertaken for the upliftment of untouchables. I am grateful to him for this. Satyashodhak Samaj, Arya Samaj and American Mission are helping me in this endevour. I am thankful to them also. But unfortunately very few of our educated people are sincerely involved in this. I hope that gradually our entire society will strive for the welfare of these unfortunate people.

Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Dhor, were actually *Vaishyas*, they were traders earlier. Who has decided that they are untouchables?.... I sumit to the people present here that the cause of our misfortune is that we do not select a right leader for ourselves. Some selfish people from among us cheat the illiterate people with their sweet talk and appoint a wrong kind of leader. Even the animals have a leader that is one of them. An animal is never a leader of the birds nor a bird ever represents the animals. The cows, bullocks and the sheep have man as their leader and hence they eventually land up in the abbotoir.

The Brahmins are a minority but they consider backwards and even the Kshatriyas (who saved them from the Mughals and whose ancestors like Rama and Krishna are their household deities) as Shudras and worse than dung and undergo purification if touched by them. Can they be called our leaders? Who would accept such leaders in the West or anywhere else in the world?

It is indeed shamelessness on their part to aspire to be the leaders of those, whom they consider to be worse than cowdung or excreta! When I came to age there wasn't a single non-Brahmin Lawyer or Administrator in my state. But now there are many since many have acquired the knowledge of law. I have given (govt.) jobs and Sanads of law to the so-called untouchables as special cases. I hope that soon they would be just as efficient as the others in their professions. Soon I am planning to give self governance to the people and I also plan to give communal representation so that everybody, even the untouchables get its benefits.

Many people ask as to what is the connection between politics and untouchability. And if there is any we would behave accordingly. But I say politics is not possible if you do not treat the untouchables like human beings. Those who want to participate in political life should treat all human beings with the dignity they deserve. If you don't treat them in this fashion, how will you serve the nation? Only those who behave in this way can be said to be serving the nation.

No other country but India has caste system. Unfortunately in India, the caste

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bias is so intense that we still treat our co-citizens like cats and dogs, nay worse than cats and dogs and continue to select inappropriate leaders and that's why poor people die in riots like those taking place in Ahemdabad, Amritsar and Mumbai. We do not want leaders that talk. We want those who act, act to demolish caste barriers and treat us like human beings. I would like to praise Ambedkar for his liberal views. Why not confer the title of "Pandit" upon him today? He is a jewel amongst intelligents. Aryasamaji, Buddhists or Christians would have gladly accepted him into their fold but he did not go there in order to enlighten you. You should be grateful to him for this. I am.

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9.

Let us Destroy Caste and Unite

Shahu Maharaja made this speech while laying the foundation stone of Shri Udaji Maratha Students' Boarding at Nashik on 15th April, 1920. He emphasises that the society cannot truely progress unless the social slavery imposed by the caste system is eliminated. Those Brahmin leaders who profess to pursue social reforms while keeping the caste system intact will only create a religious bureaucracy. Demolition of the caste system and social unity was the only way to all-round redemption.

I deem it an honour to be invited by my Maratha Brethren to lay the foundation stone of this Maratha Boarding. With equal enthusiasum do I fulfil this very pleasant task.

The sapling of this institution was planted by the magnanimous Maharaja Pawar of Dhar, the well known patron of the Maratha cause. But I venture to say that it would not have flourished into a tree had it not been for the care of the gardener to whose charge it was committed. And why should an organization not flourish when it has secured the fostering care of workers who are not only selfless but also self-sacrificing, dutiful and truth loving? The History of the Marathas amply bears out how the Patil class has done deeds appropriate to the times and creditable to the community which they lead. In those rough days of conquest they have yielded to none in martial powers and in these days of peace they are carrying on their battle with ignorance, the real enemy of the people. It is no mean credit to say that it is to such a reputable class that my friends Rao Bahadur Thorat-Patil of Vani and Dada More of Pimpalgaon Baswant belong. The sacrifice and labour which these two gentlemen have undergone in the cause of this Boarding are too well known to be told. The list of sympathetic helpmates who have supported the cause is also too long to be enumerated, I therefore, content myself only with expressing my respect for them and appreciation of their good work....

The policy of this Boarding, I am glad to say, is worthy of imitation. Though it has sprung from the munificient donations of the Marathas at the time of the Maratha Educational Conferance, it really speaks volumes for the patriotism and liberal mindedness of the organizers to find the Boarding kept open to students of all castes. One can never succeed in

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adequately praising the efforts of those who come forward with full moral courage and with the true spirit of Satyagraha to practice the elementary principles preached by the Satyashodhak Samaj that all people as the children of God are kith and kin. That this cosmopolitan principle should spread as widely as possible is a consummation devoutly to be wished; for none can doubt that it is a spread that will be greatly instrumental in bringing about unity by toning down angularities of the castes.

At one time, I confess, I was conservative and as an upholder of orthodoxy believed in the prepetuation of the caste system. The idea that thereby I was obstructing the progress of others never occurred to me and to preside over caste meetings of other castes was to me in early days an irreligious act. Nor do I like even today to preside over meetings of the particular castes. But the reason is quite different. That time I thought it impoper to shade the caste-spirit. Now I do not like to preside over them because I fear that thereby I am committing the sin of strengthening the caste-feeling.

To the leaders of the different communities I have only one message to convey. Do not be narrow-minded. Have a vision of the future. To dissolve castes is a necessity. To uphold them is a sin. Castes are obstacles in the path of the common advancement of us all and our duty therefore is to remove it with all the courage we can muster. Hold your caste-meetings but ignore not the point that they are only a means to an end. The end of our caste meeting is to end the castes. Let not then your caste-meetings help aggrevate and strengthen the system.

High class people never tire of stating that the caste system is not only natural but is also essential to the stability and progress of society. But it needs no intellectual effort to discover that those who thus argue are interested in keeping the social prestige of themselves and their progeny, that the caste system does not exist on any other planet of this universe except our earth. The age-worn slavery which this country has fallen a prey to, is the direct result of the age-worn caste system. Could anybody say that the caste system has made more than marred the fortunes of this country?

Unity is out of the question when the people are divided into impervious compartments.... There are many who say let the caste differences remain but let there be no caste hatred. If this is their honest view, I must pity their ignorance. For caste hatred is the effect of caste discrimination. To avoid this the only remedy, I see, is to remove the cause.

Caste enmity is an old disease corroding the life of the Indian people. Parashurama's act of annihilating the Khastriyas or the Peshwas' act of ploughing out the house-plots of the non-Brahmins are nothing but the reflex of this enmity. What else can be the cause of the Brahmins branding the Maharaja Shivaji and the Maratha warriors, who protected their sacred threats and tonsured tails, as Sudras ? To abolish caste-enmity we must first abolish the caste system. Let us then abolish it and be one.

I am often accused of fomenting caste jealousy under the pretext of breaking the caste system. This is a baseless accusation. While charging any opponents, I do not entrench myself in pride of my caste; neither do I hit at caste fiends using the revered or religion. I consider such oblique attacks contemptible. My only fault is that those who have fallen out or rather thrown out from the common march of progress, I

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hold them with love equal to what I bear to myself or to my community and lead them on to their proper place in society with as much effort as I can make. I do this because my conscience dictates it to me as my duty. If the depressed are not elevated in time I am afraid they will be crushed under the grinding stone of castes. Does it not therefore follow that to support the depressed castes is not the same as encouraging enmity among castes ?

It would be the happiest day of my life when we shall cease to reckon men low because of their birth. Disbelieving as I do in the caste system I have gone against it in the public. But as my efforts have not succeeded in dislodging pride of caste from those who are around me, I feel I am ill-fitted to preside over this meeting. Many foolish people have I met who regard their follow men and women as low as the brutes. But what I am most surprised at is that they are not ashamed to call themselves the leaders of the masses.

The unity of Japan was facilitated when the Samurai class relinquished its dignity of birth. Is it not time that the Brahmins of our country follow them? It is at least the duty of the Khastriyas to help all in their onward march of progress. The sanctimony of birth which elevates the Brahmins above the rest of us can no longer be celebrated. We must establish an equal start at birth for us all. To do away with the differential advantage which the Brahimns enjoy, we must no longer call them to officiate in religious ceremonies. Nor should we listen to the professional Brahmins expounding the religious books or addressing his sermons; for they only serve to strengthen in us the feeling of reverence which is inculcated in us and which is our duty to eradicate. The fact that Rama and Krishna who are our ancestors are deified and worshipped by the Brahmins incontrovertibly proves that the Brahmins are lower in order than the Khastriya. Pardon me for plain speaking, but I say we must never slaken the efforts we are making to dethrone the Brahmins in order to enthrone the Indian nation.

If the Brahmins choose to hate me in return for my love for them, then it would be treachery to myself and to my cause not to pay them in their own coins. It is on condition of their good will to me that I am prepared to let the Brahmin's officiate in religious ceremonies performed in my household. Any breach of this condition will compell me in righteous indignation to replace the Brahmin priests by the Marathas. They will deserve my partronage so long as they treat me as man. They will forefiet it the moment I find that they treat me as an animal. By reciting stories from scriptures written by themselves, Brahmins only perpetuate their hegemony and spread the message of their so-called superiority. We must stop them acting as religious middlemen. This country will not progress unless this Brahmin bureaucracy is destroyed.

The editor of the *Lok-Sangrah* I confess, is far wiser and scholarly than me. It is right that I should learn from him.However I regret to say that he has misconstrued my position. I would respect him if on perusing my speech as a whole he had brought to my notice the errors I may have committed therein. But I can't agree to submit to his dictation as to wherein lies the path of my duty. Love begets love, jealousy begets jealousy. Even unintelligent brutes return love for love; I am a sportsman and I can recall how my African cheetah returned to me from where I had left it in the jungle two hundred miles away from Kolhapur. But for my love would he have returned ?

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If I had treated it unkindly he would have been glad to run away or would have done me harm. This is certainly not a very deep philosophy for the ordinary run of mankind much less for those who by virtue of their education claim for themselves the leadership of the people. But what feel of moral syuperiority it can create to call others low and untouchables is something which passes my comprehension and I may say the comprehension of all sensible people.

It was poor people who suffered in the riots that took place in Mumbai, Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Amritsar and Lahore. Their educated leaders who made cat's pow of them were safe. The masses were too ignorant to understand the cunning of these leaders. I have too great a respect for Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Satyapal and Kitchlu to say that they of purpose engineered these riots. The blame that is thrown at their doors is due primarily to the mistakes committed by their lieuteuants. I request my critics like the editor of *Rajkaran* that they should print the whole text of my speech and then comment paragraph by pragraph specifically. To print a few quotations from a speech detached from context is to deliberately give a chance for misapprehension and misconstruction...

The lives of great men in Europe or India bear testimony to the necessity of abolishing the artificial distinction between man and man. The lives of Luther or Shivaji convey to us the same lesson. Shivaji made Marathas out of musalmans and gave big blow to conept of touch taboo by entertaining the Mahars and Mangs in artillery and cavalry. The Emperor Akbar the Great, was our true 'Mahatma'. He brought about unity between Hindus and Musalmans by marrying Jodhabai, a Rajput Hindu Princess.. He allowed her to remain a Hindu and arranged for her offering secred water to the Sun. The fort of Agra bears testimony to this and shows that what is considered impossible in the 20th Century was easily brought about in the 17th Century by a Mohammedan Emperor.

With the object of enlightening the masses the British Government has kept the educational institutions open to people of all classes. We can find no parallel even in *Ramraj* to the immense opportunity which is given to us of taking education since the reign of Queen Victoria and her decendents. Notwithstanding this, the ambrosia of learning is sedulously kept in the hands of the Brahmins. Naturally the greatest clamour for Swarajya originates from the Brahmins and equally naturally do they call those who are clamouring for communal representation so that the devolution of political power be accompanied by its distribution, traitors and the enemies of the country.

I am proud of my subjects having achieved credit in one particular respect. Their example has been emulated elsewhere. With a just sense of pride the British people call the British Parliament 'The mother of Parliaments'. In the same way Kolhapur has, I venture to say, deservedly come to be called the mother of student's boardings. There are Boardings of Marathas, Jains,Lingayats, Saraswats, Muslims, Daiwadnyas, Panchalas, Shimpis and Kayasthas. There are institutions such as those of the Arya Samaj working on the principle of equality and fraternity. To crown all these is a boarding of the untouchables with a regular programme for removing untouchability. Some deserving members of the untouchables have been granted *sanads* to practice as lawyers. Kolhapur has not only taken a lead in abolishing artificial distinction

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between man and man, but has also pioneered giving equal status to men and women in our society. I cannot let this occasion pass without paying just tribute to my beloved subjects who enthusiastically supported me in this venture.

To give all people a chance to advance in social, industrial, educational and administrative matters and learn to discharge their due share of responsibility is what I call communal representation. I deem it my duty to help and encourage those who have fallen behind and accordingly I do lend a helping hand to those who are downtrodden. Parents do not see much necessity to look after such of their children who having become of age are able to take care of themselves. They pay more regard to such of their flock as are undeveloped and cannot stand on their own legs. To some of these they only give support and others they carry on their shoulders. This is what the parents' duty is. Only fools will call this a case of unjust discrimination. I do nothing but emulate such wise parents when I give greater facilities and greater encouragement to the backward and the depressed classes. I have liberally entertained them in state service, given them *sanads* to practise and directed them to the fountain of learning. I cherish hopes of their early salvation. I feel it an injustice to see my efforts in the cause of elevating the non - Brahmins interpreted to mean hatred of Brahmins. Perhaps, they make this accusation in honesty.

Some professional politician Brahmins argue that the bogey of communal representation is raised to pull down the Brahmins out of jealousy from their elevated positions which they have earned. This is plainly a mistake; we acknowledge the political eminence which our Brahmin friends have reached. What we urge on them is while you can run, we can hardly walk, for we have not yet learned to stand on our legs. To save us from the trouble of walking you are so kindly prepared to carry us on your shoulders. We thank you for this kindness; but pray consider that the effect of your kindness would be to make us perpetually maimed. If you do not let us learn to walk through trial and error we shall never learn to do so. Admire and encourage us while we are rising and falling in our efforts to walk but please do not put obstacles in our way. Our endevours are motivated by our desire to stand independently without a support. Therefore do not misunderstand us.

Another accusation levelled against me by some newspapers is that I am absolutely against giving any Swarajya to my subjects. This is again a pure myth. In the speech on which this accusation is based, I said :

"But if I may be allowed to express an opinion at this stage I would only say that I for one, would hesitate to make any constitutional changes in the direction of the reforms until the general level of education among the masses has risen and is at least partially equalized with that of the higher classes."

This will make it clear how my words are distorted and misrepresented. I believe it is not safe to devolve self rule on the society till all lower castes begin to educate and till all sections of people understand their rights and have capacity to exercise those rights.

In this country of ours where the reign of castes has a powerful sway on the minds of the pepole and where 70 to 80 per cent are ill-prepared to understand and exercise their rights and duties, political power will

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fall into the hands of a single caste who, in serving its own interest, will do a horrible damage to the society. How power in the hands of self-interested persons only serves to what their natural desire to oppress others, is aptly borne out by history. The ancient struggles between the Aryas and the Anaryas or the more recent struggles under the Peshawai point to this historic process. If opportunity for self aggrandizement turns good men into bad ones how very necessary is it to provide against political power falling into the hands of those whose trade has been to keep others in slavery and who have given sufficient indications of their desire to continue it. Such is the spirit of what I said. You know too well the policy and the cunningness of the *Kesari* and its followers. The *Kesari*'s argument that expansion of school buildings and making them spacious be given priority over making education compulsory will certainly flumox any intelligent person. 'No cake to a few until all are served with bread', is the principle of the English Labour Party. In India 90 per cent people starve while 10 per cent feast. Those who urge that ghee be served to those who are feasting before even coarsest of food is provided to the starving betray their phony anxiety for the masses. I fail to understand how these wise ones are not ashemed to publish damnable utterances in papers and in the public that Legislative Councils are no places for the Lingayats, Jain and other traders to exhibit their skills in weighing the balances or for the farmers to show their skill in ploughing.

I disapprove of the transfer of power from the hands of the British into the hands of such a small community as the Brahmins. What the history from the times of Parshuram tells us? In fact it is difficult to forget how the Brahmins withholding education with which they enriched themselves from others struggled constitutionally to keep them in subjection. Free and compulsory primary education is the only invigorating tonic that will enable the lower classes to throw of this incubus of the past. I have commenced free and compulsory education in my state and I have no doubt that the next generation will be a literate generation.

While I lay great stress on primary education I have not neglected higher and collegiate education. My state is smaller than such districts as Satara or Belgaum and yet there are seven high schools in existence and two more will commence very soon. At the top of this all there is a fullfledged college.

You will no doubt understand that my efforts in education are motivated solely because I am most anxious to give Swarajya as early as possible to my subjects. If all my subjects had reached the literacy test of vernacular III std. I would have very cheerfully handed over to them the responsibilities of government and retired on pension sufficient to maintain myself. The whole burden of law and order and good government rests on my shoulders today. The subjects are responsible for the due payment of the revenue only. In future the responsibility to pay tax and to administer the revenues will belong to the subjects. But my subjects must be partially if not wholly fit to take such a responsibility. In other words I believe that the entire population must have reached the stage of primary education before a section of it is provided with advanced education. When the whole mass of the people are drenched in ignorance while only a small section of it is well educated, any devolution of political power will fall in the hands of the educated giving rise to a Swadeshi (native) bureaucracy. We have

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enough experience of this kind of bureaucracy. The Peshwas through the mistake of Shahu I got a chance to usurp more and more power; but the outcome of the Peshwa rule was imprisonment of Shahu and fostering of caste-spirit. It was under the Peshwa rule that the untouchables had to walk with a pot tied to their neck and a sweeping broom attached to their loins. None can wish the return of such days and the best and only effectual way to prevent their return is to educate the people before granting them political power so that they may know how they use it and be prepared to guard against its misuse.

When the son is grown up to take charge of the household it is our old Aryan rule of life that the father should retire. In consonance with this ancient rule I mean to retire on pension when my subjects have grown fit to take care of themselves. I am hopeful that this consummation which I devoutly wish for will be realised before too long.

Lest what I said may be misconstrued, I hasten to make plain what I have been saying so far. I am of opinion that the two wheels as well as the yoke of a cart must be strong and stable before we can expect it to run its course smoothly. By the new reform act the political power in British India will be divided between the civil service and the representatives of the people and it is provided that the power kept in the hands of the civil service will gradually pass in the hands of the representatives of the people. I am afraid such a diarchical system of government will be ill-suited to the conditions peculiar to the Native States. There the power will be divided between the subjects, the civil services, the Native Ruler and British Government. It would not do to divide power among these and let it pass gradually into the hands of the people. I am desirous of entrusting my people with full and complete power as soon as they are advanced to understand its excercise. Till they grow up to this stage I feel great anxiety in handing over any political power for it may be monopolized by the few to the disadavntage of the many. When the subjects are in possession of complete self-Government the Ruler can but be its guide. The subjects of the Native States will then be responsible to the British and not to the Ruler. Such being the difference in the two situations it would be dangerous to copy wholesale the British plan of political reform for application to the Native States.

Whether political reform should precede social reform is a dispute which is attended with more heat than light. The two are as closely connected as the wheels of a carriage. That you can never succeed in driving a carriage safely if it rests on one wheel only is a common sense . Those who plead for political reform only and pay no heed to social reform or deny its urgency give sufficient reason to doubt their motives. It would not be a wrong to call them carfty and cunning.

It would be better for the British to foster strenuously spread of education among masses before granting them self-Government. But while there is no use in crying over spilt milk, I urge those who claim themselves to be the leaders of the people to follow the noble example of my friend Rao Bahadur Thorat and utilize the political freedom to emancipate those of their brethern whom they have held in subjection for untold generations....

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10.

Take up the Task of Educating Your People

Address at the gathering of "Somavanshiya Samaj" at Nashik on 16th April, 1920 where Shahu exposes the true nature of the so-called concern the Brahmin leaders show for emancipation of the backward castes.

Friends,

I am thankful to you for your kind invitation and I am extremely pleased to meet the 'society' you have organised. It gives me considerable relief to find that the leaders of your community have recognised in time that education alone will endow the community which they lead with power to survive in these days when the struggle is so keen and so extensive. If you people, poor and oppressed, are to rise from your depressed conditions the work of elevation must be undertaken by leaders belonging to your community. Self-help is the key to success in all struggles. From this standpoint such of your leaders as do belong to yourselves cannot be too adquately congratulated.

On such an occasion I feel it my duty to convey to you with a free and open mind my views about the ways that will ultimately lead to your betterment....

Being a ruler of a Native State, I am often reproached for speaking in British territories. My first submission is that I am not here as a ruler of state, but I am here as a friend and servant of the millions of my countrymen whose conditions will excite pity in any one who claim a human heart. In that capacity if my countrymen approach me to solicit my views on any subject I think it would be a serious breach of decorum to be silent or withhold them. Secondly, the Native States are inalienably interwoven with the British territory. As subjects or as treaty-holders we are bound to the British Empire, and as such there are many interests that are common to us all. I am therefore of opinion that by interesting myself in problems affecting the interests of us all I am not sinning. In fact I regard it my duty to be so interested.

The social differences, based upon mere accident of birth, find no sanction from religion in any other country except ours. The ugly aspect

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which these social distinctions wear is most plainly reflected in the treatment which has been meted out to you by men of the higher castes. Is it not a digraceful thing that you who are our breatheren should be regarded as untouchables and should be treated in a way far less respected than cats, pigs and dogs ? The principle of untouchability, I venture to think, is a recent addition to the religious scriptures which govern the life of the Hindus. For in this very place of pilgrimage where we are assembled today the bathing pond of the Mahars is situated in the midst of the ponds of the different communities. Of course it is impossible to observe untouchability in such a situation.

Notwithstanding this, is it not shameful that in ordinary life we should observe untouchability and deny you the benefits of full and complete social intercourse ? It is only when the higher castes, in our Hindu Society repent for this social crime that there will grow in them the true spirit of partiotism. It is then only that the educated classes guided by the spirit and love for their country can be expected to tender you any enduring help. At the time I was invested with ruling powers I found Kolhapur dominated by the educated people of a single caste. There was not a single educated person in the government service belonging to the backward classes. To raise their status I felt it but proper to adopt the policy of entertaining them in a liberal way in the civil service of the State. I gave deserving ones from them *sandas* to practise, instituted special scholarships for their education and established boardings to help the students. The good results of my work along this line for the last 25 years are just appearing on the horizon. The backward classes other than the untouchables are advancing slowly but surely. Their position is akin to that of a child just learning to walk. But you people are like a child that has not yet learned to balance or stand. It is because of your helpless condition that my attention is directed towards you. My policy has been to encourage you and help you along all the walks of life. Your own caste-fellows who are my subjects will tell you what I have been doing for your uplift in my own State.

The Pune papers have most mercilessly tortured the little speech I made at the conference of your people recently held in my territory. That those who run these papers should waste their valuable space and time in commenting on a speech from such an uneducated person like myself is indeed strange. But I am afraid they have misrepresented me. It may be that my inability to express myself clearly owing to want of command over the Marathi language may have given them occasion to misinterpret my views and to paint me as the pivot of a movement engineered to drag the Brahmins down. I disavow this credit given to me; for, I confess, I have no merits to occupy the pivotal position they are pleased to credit me with. However the main theme of what I said at the conference was to impress upon the audience the important point that no religion on the earth sanctions such an institution as the castes except the Hindu religion. On that account, I said that we ought to abolish the castes, which has been the cause of many social struggles. They say Parasuram annihilated all the Kashtriyas in the interest of Brahmins; and yet we find Rama and Krishna (the Kshatriya) ensconced in Brahmin sanctums being worshipped. Even though, the Peshwa overshadowed Shahu Maharaja, the Maharaja Pratapsingh came to his own

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at the end of Peshwai. I am convinced such social upheavals were ultimately provoked by caste-feelings. My earnest advice has always been to build the structures of self-Government on foundations firmer than those of castes. I therefore repeat my convictions that self-Govenment without social union is undesirable and will be unstable.

A few days ago I had an occasion to visit St. Columbus Scotch Mission in Bombay and I am an old friend of the American Mission. Miss Sutherland, Dr. Vail and Dr. Wanless have crossed the seven seas to give our people life and education from selfless motives caring for no more than the mere necessaries of life. To cause us no offence they have even adopted our ways of living and even our diet. Such strangers who are maturing our body and our mind are indeed holy persons. We do find a solitary instance of Mr. Gandhi who can match them. But how many institutions like the foreign missions can we boast of which are helping the cause of the oppressed and the diseased with a selfless motive working on the principle that to serve mankind is to serve God? Some papers have misrepresented me in what I have said about Mr. Gandhi, Swami Shradhanand, and Mr. Gandhi and Mrs. Besant are indeed holy persons. But I believe that holy being like all human beings are not infallible. Mr. Gandhi, I am sure, will not be resentful for what I have said for he is candid enough to acknowledge his own errors. However Mr. Gandhi is a solitary instance of a personality that claims our tribute of love and respect.

But we must first examine the character, ethics and moral courage of the other leaders before owning them as their own. On many occassions we find leaders of educated castes showing flood of sympathy for the downtrodden. But when it is time for action, say like interdining or such other initiatives, they back out claiming resistence from wife and kins. But this is ridiculous. From times immemorial our brave Hindu women have been blindly following in the footsteps of their husbands – even to their husbands' funeral pyre. To say that they object to such petty venture as husbands' interdining is an insult to the entire Hindu womanhood. I think it is because of their own reluctance or lack of moral courage that these men hide behind their women folk. I therefore ask you to ponder whether you can gain materially from lip sympathy of such cowardly leaders. It was one such educated Bramhin leader who the other day proclaimed at Nipani that he was prepared to interdine with the untouchables if that brought about Swarajya. How much sympathy do you think he has for you who lays such a great condition for a trivial act like dining with you ? My sincere advice to you is not to depend for your salvation upon the good will of such pretenders but to take up the task of educating your men and women on your own shoulders. Our educated high class people feel indignant for the special efforts that are being made in my State for the elevation of all the backward classes. If all agree that there is some sense in the procedure of doctors and lady doctors to give more nourishing food to the weak and the sickly child so that he may come to be in line with the robust, I don't see why I should be blamed for applying it in the case of the untouchables. Some Poonaites allege that I have adopted this discrimination as a convenient means for advancing the cause of my community. I deny it as a false allegation. I swear that I will never do

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anything disgraceful to the line established by the Chhatrapati Shivaji. It would be improper to misrepresent my efforts for emancipation of backward communiies as a reflex of my jealousy of Brahmins. Many of my trustworthy officers and advisers are Brahmins. Many Brahmins enjoy *Inams* from me. I am sure my Brahmin subjects will testify that I have not neglected their interests.

In my speech at Mangaon I expressed my desire to give Swarajya to my people on a small scale in a short time. An Editor has invited soothsayers to forecast specifications of time and scale of Swarajya I promised to my subjects. Most gladly would I have furnished the specifications asked for were it possible to do so. But this is a complicated question of the multiplicity of interests and I regret, I connot announce an early decision. The other day in a meeting held at Sholapur a speaker said that if the high class Hindus desire they can remove untouchability in no time. I should here like to raise a query as to why this so easy task which can be accomplished in no time is not done yet ? Or can any one predict the day of its consummation ? A leader once extended his sympathy for the untouchables by stating that he had once made room in his carriage for the Ganapati of the shoemakers. I ask why has he not thrown off his caste prejudices publicly so far ? And when is he prepared to do so ?

It augers well for the future that notwithstanding such leaders the Hindu society is gradually loosing its faith in untouchability and my subjects will deserve self-Government to the extent to which they show themselves prepared to treat one another with brotherly feeling....

In conclusion, I say to you, continue the sacred work you have undertaken without flinching and I feel sure God will help you on to its ultimate triumph.

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11.

Religion and Caste System

This is a famous presidential address of Shahu to the All India Depressed Classes Conference held at Nagpur on 30th May, 1920. Here Shahu asserts that large scale inter-caste marriges will be one of the most effective measures to annihilate the caste system. Shahu also expounds in this address his basic principles and beliefs from which enamate his revolutionary actions.

Mr. President of the Reception Committee and Gentlemen,

I feel extremely proud of myself when I find myself to be called to preside over this conference without having obtained my previous consent. I am glad to find you look upon me as one among yourselves though once upon a time I did not cherish much love for you but I recognised my error, believe me, gentlmen that I shall even continue to love you.

I am afraid your choice of a President has fallen in a wrong person, for, I am really not learned enough to guide the destinies of this conference. There are many self interested people, who make a false pose by perfering good will and love towards those for whose interest they are really indifferent, merely for sake of aggrandisement. My only prayer therefore is that God may never grant me such a mean mind. Today we have before us the enlightened mind of the untouchable. I have used that term untouchable simply because it is in vogue. You are not untouchable; on the other hand you are the members of the Indian Nation, more intelligent, more self-sacrificing far more heroic and well disposed than those who have the nerve to address you as untouchables. We must work with the firm conviction that we are bretheren of the same status and that we have the same common rights which each of us must respect. Those who play false ruses can no longer deceive the people whom experience has taught to detect the true from false.

Though I have been called to preside over this conference, I say that I am not a leader of any community nor I desire to be such. On the other hand I dissuade those who follow me on the false belief that I am their leader. My thoughts and my acts represent nobody but myself and it is my hope that my relations or my friends should not imitate me without a proper consideration of the pros and cons. I allow them in such matters

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full scope for self-determination.

We, who are Indian fellow subjects, no matter to what caste or religion we belong, must never forget that we are all Indians. Religion may be a matter of some concern from the stand-point of individual but it must never be a hitch in national affairs. The most commonly accepted definition of religion is that it is a path leading to the Almighty. But just as various roads coming from all directions converge on the metropolitian cities like London, Mumbai or Calcutta, there are various religions that lead us to the same Almighty.

If the simile be true that religions are but different roads that lead us to the same goal, one really wonders as to why people of different religions but one goal should hate each other simply because of differences in circumstances they happened to choose the different path. About the circumstances from which originated these diverse religions one can only speculate. But since none can vouchsafe that he has reached God by following one particular religion it may be safely said that none has a right to plead dogmatically that his religion is the only true religion and that the rest are false.

Mercy is the true basis of religion. Self-centerium leads on to degradation, says the Sage Kabir. Thus it follows that the true religion consists in serving your fellows and to find God in man and respect him. On this all religions agree. All preach that doing good to others is virtue and doing ill to others is sin. When there is thus an agreement on the fundamentals among the different religions it is really wrong that their followers should hate one another. There were many wars fought in this country but they were all motivated by ambition for secular dominion.

Akbar or Shivaji fought not for the sake of religion or caste. Many Marathas, Rajputs and other Hindu Officers and heroes flourished under the patronage of Akbar. Similarly the armies of Vijayanagar and Shivaji counted many Mohammadens. All of these never seceded from their integrity and honesty even when they were led to fight against their own kinsmen.

I have above indicated the true essense of all religions, and I am convinced that a nation which acts up to it insures its progress. But we who have abandoned the true essence of religion which asks us to see God in masses and instead have declared a large portion of our common humanity lower than the brutes on the strength of some fake scriptures. Can we ever expect to please the Almighty by our cunning tricks of making fervent prayers, beating drums, making pooja, reading the Puranas, going on pilgrimage barefooted or by falling prostrate to him? We cannot win Him by such false means. On the other hand we are sure to incur his displeasure and punishment. The only way to ingraciate ourselves into his favour is to treat his children with equality and fraternity.

The establishment of the British Government is a boon to India and specially to the untouchables therein. In place of the Laws of Manu which were intended to uphold the superiority of one particular caste we have today in India legislative inactments which recognise the principle of equality before law. To promulgate that Brahmins should not be hanged and that in all religious ceremonies they should be treated equals of God, and to believe that all other castes are contemptible and created only to serve Brahmins as their slaves is negation of

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conscience and of all higher human values. In fact in modern times anybody will be ashamed to frame such laws. There were once in India laws which prohibited a certain class of people from reading the Vedas, and those who did read them were meted out such cruel punishments as branding and burning their eyes. We must be thankful to the British Government for doing away with such inhuman laws. However there is much to be desired by way of reform in the Hindu law. The sense of nationality and the sense of progress have penetrated the Hindu Society. Our notions about marriage, foreign travel, tolerance have taken a firm root in our minds. We, therefore need to give these notions a legal backing if we desire that the Hindu community should progress.

The British Government declared equality of all before law and the British missionaries inaugurated the principles of fraternity by their kind treatment to the untouchables. The Governments of Holland and Belgium are negligent of the interest of the people who are living under their suzerienty. On the other hand the British people are offering us Swarajya even when there are many who oppose such grant. Obviously we must be thankful and loyal to the Empire which is guided by such noble and highminded statesmanship. This country owes a great debt of gratitude to the British people. It was a recognition of this fact that the Indian people without distinction of caste and creed mustered strong to help the British Raj in the recent war. I take it that it is Providence which has made us a part of the Empire.

The untouchables of Madras are mated out the most inhuman and cruel treatment by their co-religionist. That the Madras Brahmins treat the non-Brahmins most unjustly is notorious. We must therefore be all grateful to the late Dr. Nair for his efforts to awaken the non-Brahmins to the sense of self-respect and the sense of their rights. He worked hard for the elevation of the Panchmas and all his domestics belonged to that class. I cannot let this occasion pass without mentioning Sir Shankaran Nair who has always taken a very kindly interest in the elevation of the depressed classes.

I am of opinion that the salvation of this country depends upon the abolition of the caste system. It is therefore the prime need of the time that there should be inter-caste marriages on a large scale notwithstanding the opposition. Interdining, exchange or sharing of food among castes is now increasing and will increase, no matter what the opposition does. But that cannot be said of inter-caste marriages. Before we can expect a wide spread of inter-marriages we must first of all change the laws which at present consider such marriages illegitimate and deprive the couple's children the right of inheritance. The Hon'able Mr. Patel's Bill in the Central Legislative Council was therefore a necessity. No doubt that the Bill would have resulted in lowering the dignity of the Brahmins. And the Bill therefore has been most violently opposed by the Brahmin section of press. From the standpoint of the Brahmin interest it is natural that they should oppose the Bill. But they ought to have realised that they were sacrificing the larger interests of the country. The orthodox party finds nothing wrong in living together of a man and woman as husband and wife without marriage. But they would object to the solemnization of the ties by religious ceremonies so that such acts may be elevated to the dignity of a moral act. By

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witholding the religious sanctions they have been unwittingly acting as the enemies of public morality.

I cannot help citing by way of illustration the instance of my friend Mr. Arundale. His marriage with a Brahmin girl has brought on him the warth of the orthodox Brahmins. If we look at the event with an unprejudiced eye we shall have to say that the more of such incidents the better. There are many who complian that expensive marrige ceremonies drain off the purse of the people and that those funds could have been spent more profitably on edcation. But these very people do not consent to have marriages sanctified by the most economical methods of registration. The unregistered Hindu marriages are not legally recognised. This leaves a legal way to a married Indian to marry in England or in France according to the procedure prescribed by the laws of those countries. There are many who have availed themselves of this opportunity and have thrown their once devoted and dutiful wives into the abuse of shame and misery which is the lot of many an Indian widows. But such a situation weighs nothing with the orthodox party. Registration of marriages would no doubt put a stop to these ignominous ways. But it is because registration would open a royal road to inter-marriages that we find the orthodox party lined against it. It is argued that it is improper that the progeny of mixed marriages should share with agnates or congnates superior in status or dignity. But this is a lame excuse. It is strange that those who bring this excuse forward are tolerant of the existing law which allows a Christian convert or a Hindu who has married according to registration to share with other Hindu coheirs. The Patel Bill will help uplifting the downtrodden communities of India. We must therefore be grateful to the supporters of the Bill.

That we can see a straw in the eyes of others but not mole in our own is a proverb which we often experience in our life. The Brahmins for the last ten or twenty years are spreading treason among the Indian people by deluding them into the false belief that the British people are looting India. But they feel no shame in asking the British Government to put a stop to the activities of the Satyashodhak Samaj whose main object is to expose the falsities and crudities written by the Brahmins in their phony scriptures.

I heartily subscribe to the saying of the Sage Tukaram that we should respect him who practises what he teaches. Consequently I have a positive dislike for deceitful people who while they outwardly make all shows of sympathy for you are engaged in the mean occupation of retarding the noble work of your elevation. My recent speech at Nashik has been subject of adverse criticism. Personally it amuses me. It is indeed shameful that people who say that they know nothing about Kolhapur affairs personally and that they have derived all the information by hearsay should say anything without weighing their words or give their own construction without submitting the evidence. Therefore I know that the main object of such unmeasured bombast and stump oratory is to terrify everyone into a submission to the established superior rights of a particular class. I, on my part, pity the upholders of such an oligarchy when they boast of themselves that they are the leaders and the well-wishers of the people at large. Such obscurants can never be expected to lead the movement of social reform.

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Crows can see only the wounds. In like manner these obscurants only see what may be called the cost of progress. I am criticised for giving Sanads to some befitting members of the untouchable cammunities to practise as lawyers. Some classes in India have inherited the notion that such occupations as the medical or legal. are their exclusive preserve. There is no dispute as to the principle that there should be right man in the right place. But the principle must need be modified to suit changes in the times. Even the British Government in earlier times for the sake of giving political education offered to persons of lesser qualification the post of Collector or Judge.... If the diplomas which I gave to the untouchables had been given to Brahmins, Kayasthas or Saraswatas it would have provoked no comment. In fact it did not provoke any comment when the candidates belonged to these communities received such diplomas. That a similar treatment to candidates from the Marathas or the untouchables should have caused such an uproar is a patent sign of the nobility of mind of my critics! The Brahmin community is considerably perturbed to find matriculated Mahars and Mangs forcing their entry into the higher occupation which were hitherto closed against them. They would have felt nothing wrong if the Mahars and Mangs had been Christians. Most of the Native States confer diplomas on candidates of higher communities who are much below in education than Mahars and Mangs whom I turned lawyers. But I have never heard any one complaining such an act. My main object in giving these diplomas was to open the legal occupation to untouchables.These and many other fields were closed to them by custom and coercion for generations. The aim is to imrove their conditions and create self-confidence among them.

My experience as a sportsman tells me that a horse drinks only when he is shown the water. I argue by analogy that these backward classes must be shown the opportunity in order they may learn how to create an opportunity. I am convinced that these people are not devoid of natural ability. What they are in need of is opportunity. If proof be wanted there is no paucity thereof. The eminence to which men of Matang, Tunk, Parashar, Vasistha, Chokhamela and such other communities considered low have risen as also the Sages born in low communities sufficiently bears out the above statement. Not long before we find even in advanced country like England people were granted the diploma of Barrister merely by dining a certain number of days in the inns of Court. Even men, non-matriculated Indian availed themselves of this opportunity. But these dinner Barristers were deemed fit to conduct cases in any court of law and it will be admitted that this class has produced many a noteworthy lawyers.

Strangely,our high class people feel insulted when I try to raise the status of the untouchables by giving them Sanads to practise law. Howerver, they are wrong. To wait for equality of treatment till their educational qualifications are raised connot be preferred to the policy of immediate action to end the heartless and thoughtless social tyranny which cannot be matched anywhere on this earth. Immediatism is the only successful way, that is my firm belief. I do not wish to follow the ways of those reformers who would delay indefinitely any action in favour of social reform on the pretext that it offends the sentiments of the older folks. The enlightened mind of the country is agreed on the evils of the caste

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system. The only question is who should begin the work of abolition.

It is usually argued that the work must be undertaken by the low caste people. But I am convinced that their efforts would not avail much. The move must be initiated by those who are at the top of the social ladder. Those who have enjoyed the social prestige by the mere sanctity of their birth for these untold ages must consent to give up their exclusivity. Samurais of Japan did it and that was the beginning of the end of caste discrimiation in Japan. Efforts for the abolition of the castes if initiated from below by lower castes are unlikely to succeed. On the other hand if initiative comes from the higher castes, it is bound to get good response. But till such initiative is taken by the higher castes, the lower classes must continue their efforts to rise their position in the social system. If the lower castes climb one step up and the higher castes climb one down to lend the lower ones a helping hand, that will be a great leap forward in abolition of caste system without giving rise to hatred or calumny on either side. Even we Marathas must also be compelled to dissolve their caste for the sake of unity.

Religion can no longer be an obstacle in the way of destroying castes. It was in Mesopotamia that the Hindus and Mohammedans fought shoulder to shoulder notwithstanding the religious differences. This was because all these people felt they were the members of the Empire first and foremost that was how they were able to achieve victory in the recent war. It may be that our people have suffered at the hands of Christian powers. But we must never forget that the British people have protected us from evil ambitions of their co-religionists.They protected the Indian people from the aggressive ambitions of the Russians and the Afghans. It cannot be said that religion comes in the way of our unity.

There are many who abuse me because I openly declare my opinions. Their main objective happens to be to earn cheap popularity. They only make a laughing stock of themselves. I endeavour to raise the status of all backward people. But my efforts and words are misconstrued and distorted to accuse me of hatred of Brahmins. I leave it to you gentlemen to decide for yourself whether this calumny is just. You have accepted me as your own. I am glad and hope you will continue to love me till the end. I can assure you that no amount of adverse comment or circumstances will deter me in lending all the help I can to the cause of your progress.

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12.

There are no Brahmins on the Earth !

These are concluding remarks by Shahu made at the All India Depessed Classes Conference at Nagpur on May 30, 1920. He trenchantly criticises Brahmin scholars who propagate that no varnas remain on earth today other than the Brahmins and Shudras. In retort, he asserts that Brahmins and true spirit of Brahminism has vanished from the earth.

One particular caste usually ridicules me and assault me with fierce criticism because I always take your side. And today I have presided over your conference ! That means more ammunition against me and a fresh wave of instigations against me. But I do appreciate the newspapers who are critical of me. I swallow all the humiliation and torture from these people with forebearance only to serve you and to be at beck and call whenever you want me. Do not hesitate in making me serve you.

All of us, myself, my friends Nimbalkar, Bhosale, Baburao Yadav, Kadam, Dattoba Painter, Patil of Belgaum have taken the oath to sacrifice our body and time in your service. My son is now mature and he can look after the affairs of state in my absence. And if an 'oligarchy' imposes its bureaucracy on me, I shall leave my state to the care of my son and devote fully in your service. That is my promise. I hope, you will accept my service.

One who relies on others

Is doomed

One who strives on his own

Is redeemed

So says the saint. Beware of those self-centred brothers[1] who pretend to help you. Discard their hand.

My friend Dr. Paranjpe says there remain no Kshatriyas according to the *varnashram* dharma today. I disagree. Brahmins are supposed to enhance their radiance through daily brahminical rituals and thus they become so exalted that their curse can incinerate any one. We do not see

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[1] Shahu here refers to Brahmin leaders – Editor

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any such Brahmin radiance around today. On the contrary we see them adopting the thinking and behaviour that is attributed to lowly *dasyus* and *chandals*. Paid service has become their pasteur. This only underscores the fact that they are no Brahmins. This is true at least for south India.

And since we do not see any Brahmin radiance around, this means there remain no Brahmins on the face of this earth. There are Vaishyas who follow their stipulated dharma in trade and commerce. There are shudras who follow their ordained duties meticulously. Kshatriyas don't have to fight every day. But whenever a call comes, they render their duty bravely, as seen in the recent war. There is no doubt about the existence of the Kshatriyas. The only Varna that has vanished from the face of the earth is the Brahmin. Because we do not see those who call themselves Brahmins today following their ordained duty of accumulation and spread of knowledge and purity. The so-called Brahmins today are '*dasyus*', paid servants and nothing more. Conclusion – Brahmins do not exist but the remaining three Varnas do !

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13

Social Morality: Important Aspect of Social Reforms

This is Shahu's presidential address at non-Brahmin Social Conference held at Hubli, Karnataka, on July 27th, 1920. In this speech Shahu has explained with examples how Brahmins by adding fabricated myths to the religious texts like the Mahabharata and Matsya Puarana have brought about degradation of Hindu society. Social norms prescribed by such fabricated religious texts are not binding on non-Brahmins. He adds that alcoholism, child marriages, compulsory widowhood, offering girl child to Gods and other such malpractices have brought about physical, mental and intellectual downfall of Hindu society. Shahu has also voiced his expectations that non-Brahmins would make a success of reforms by overcoming mutual differences.

Sir Tyagaraja Chetty, my dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am extremely proud that you have made me a President of this Conference, considering me as one amongst you, though I must say I don't deserve it. I have spent my youth studying in this region, in places like Dharwad, Hubli; I have come here again because you made me the President of this Conference.

Thanks to this Conference, we have got the pleasure of meeting Sir Tyagaraja Chetty and also that enthusiastic gentleman Mr. Chikodi. Mr. Menshinkai and Mr. Kambali have worked very hard to make this Conference a success. The Brahmins preserved knowledge and kept the light of knowledge glowing; we must congratulate them on this. But at the same time if there had been liberals like Hon. Ranade, Gokhale, Agarkar in those days, they would have given access to knowledge to everybody and the prevailing selfish practice of not educating others would not have come into being. And hence there would have been no occasion to call this separate non-Brahmin Conference.

I always advocate casteless society but I firmly believe that there should be classes in a society. Brahminism presupposses caste system. Any indecent behaviour by a Brahmin by birth to a non-Brahmin lady causes

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upliftment of her family. For example, Krishna's wives, when facing some calamity, were asked by Dalbhya Rishi to fulfill the following ritual. On Sundays, under the ascendence of *Hasta, Pushya* and *Punarvasu* constellations, the woman should take a bath with medicated water. Then pray Lord Vishnu with enchantations like 'लिंगस्थानाय नमः कंदर्पविधेयनमः' Then calling a healthy Brahmin and feeding him sweetmeats, she should consider him the embodiment *of Kama,* the God of love and she should offer her body with smile and sweet talk to him. She should do all the things he desires for his fulfillment. Thereafter she should fulfill the desire of any Brahmin, who comes to her on Sundays and turn to others after he leaves. *(Matsyapurana; Cha.69; Calcutta edition)*

The Duty of a Grihastha (householder) is described in the Mahabharata as follows: Once a Brahmin went to Queen Oghavati and told her, "I am a guest, fulfill my desire. This is a duty towards a guest" and started making love to her. Just then her husband the king returned and knocked the door. Upon this the Brahmin shouted from inside, "O Agni's son Sudarshana, I am a Brahmin, your guest; your wife is fulfilling my desire as befits a guest." At this the King smiled and said," I would give all my wealth, my wife and even my life to the guest, this is my word. This is a duty of a Householder". *(Mahabharata; Anushasan parva, Cha. 2)*

Some people may object to this saying, that these are old stories from the Puranas. There is no need to refer to them now. But the following case may prove how the people have to suffer the consequences of them till today. In the month of Ashadh Vikram Samvat 1957 a man from Allahabad donated his wife to a priest, following his mother's advice and the precepts from the Puranas. The priest led her home with him. The man offered five thousand Rupees to get the woman back, but no avail. The conflict went to the courts. The British Magistrate gave a verdict that this donation is not keeping with the laws and the priest is liable to be punished. A detailed report on this is found in the newspapers of those days. Such occurances would not have taken place if a single caste had not been in a dominant position. Hence let's demolish castes and give more importance to class. Those, who do not want to co-operate with us or those who are not sympathetic to our cause, let's convince them, let's request them, let's tell them a few wise truths. If they do not accept, let's not despise them but let's go our way. God is just. If they repent their misdeeds and if we are sure that they will not go back to their old ways, we shall accept them into our fold. I need not prove that this is an effort to establish superiority on the basis of 'चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टम् गुणकर्मविभागशः' (*I made the four Varnas, taking into consideration the attributes and actions*).

Rishis like Vasishtha were born in humble caste, but they became Brahmins on the basis of their attributes and actions. Had this tradition continued, the present state of degradation and division in the society would not have come into being!

The help that we offered to the Empire in the recent Great War was not proportionate to our population. As a member of the recruiting board I know this very well. If the Brahmin-non-Brahmin division was not there, we could have helped the Empire better. This could also have helped the national cause.

The Jains and Lingayats were Hindus

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originally, but because they were better morally, intellectually and physically, the Brahmins selfishly deprived them of education. Disappointed, they left the faith and embraced new faith. In this way freed from the Brahminical repression, they did not forget that the poor non-Brahmins are their brethern and though themselves free, they explain to the poor Marathas and other non-Brahmins how they developed in education, enterprise and commerce... I am glad to note that our Jain and Lingayat brothers are helping the depressed by offering them education and skills for trading and commerce. On occasions like today's we have expressed our mutual love and concern. The type of cooperation that we received in our task from liberal Brahmins like Ranade, Gokhale, Agarkar and that light which dimmed after their death, should be lit again; we should make efforts to gain that kind of cooperation.

The editors of *Kesari* are saying that "with good intentions one can say that the whole of the mankind is born of the same God instead of saying some were born from His mouth, some from His arms, some from His chest and some from His feet. But if the intentions are not good, then even the Satan can find suitable quotes in the Bible." I congratulate them for this, because I have been saying the same thing. But only those who act as they preach are respected. When have the so-called Brahmins treated the non-Brahmins with the feeling of equality, as we are all the children of the same God? Forget about treating them with respect. It is only now that they are talking about it, isn't it a sign of something?

The same newspaper says that Brahmins were the Gurus of the Kshatriya. Sage Vasishtha was born to a prostitute, but he acquired Brahminhood by virtue of his acts and merit. We shall always rever such Brahmins, be them Sudras or Atisudras by birth. All the Puranas and Mahapuranas like Mahabharat, Bhagawat were written by Brahmins. The prescriptions or directives contained in them may be binding on those who wrote them. But these are not binding on the others against whom these directives are stipulated by the writers. Are these so-called pandits of law unaware of this basic principle?

One important aspect of social reforms is development of social character. Because of some harmful traditions and religiosity today certain malpractices like alchoholism, child marriages, compulsory widowhood, offering girl children to God are flourishing in our society. This has resulted in physical, mental and intellectual loss. You must take measures to change this. The main aim should be the formation of moral character. This formation or the rise of a nation is impossible without citizens of good character. We should pay attention to physical strength. We must also remember that despite physical strength and bravery mighty nations like Rome disintegrated because of loss of moral character.

Some Hindu castes have rendered a great service in the last war. Going beyond caste and religious differences for loyalty to the throne and nation, they have fulfilled their duty admirably; they have shown a way to others. In the last war the British government offered us an opportunity to show courageously, that helping the nation rise and loyalty to the sovereign emperor are our biggest duties. We must be grateful to them for this. Because of them the religio-social evolution and progress have got a great impetus.

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The consolidation of British power in this country took place after 1857. Before that period, we were not civilized. There were no railways, no telegraphs, we were strangers to the concepts of secularism and regularity. We cannot forget that they educated us, brought about social and religious reforms so that we were able to demand self government.

The Muslims, like the Marathas fulfil the duties of Kshatriya. The traditions they follow are similar to those of the Marathas. The Maratha army used to have Muslim Sardars, while the Muslim armies had Maratha Sardars. In recent times Marathas and Muslims have faught together in the British army, defeating Muslim nations like Turkey. The credit for saving such Muslim nations as Turkey, Persia, Afganistan from the clutches of the Russian bear is essentially England's. In 1877 by capturing Constantinopole, Russia wanted to wipe out Turkey from Europe, that plan was almost successful had not England rushed to Turkey's aid. Similarly, one should not forget that England protected the Calipha in 1880. In the recent war England wanted to protect Turkey. But the radical parties in Turkey joined hands with Germany and hence England had to declare war on Turkey unwillingly.

One can show them clemency, but can they be called friends when they are our enemies and several Hindus and Muslims in India have shed blood in the battle against them? Aurangazeb and Shivaji both had several Hindu as well as Muslim Sardars in their armies but did they ever demand anything contrary to their national interests? The Marathas and Muslims have traditionally followed the practice of being loyal to those whom they serve. The Arabs and Turks are our brothers. It would not be proper to abandon them at the behest of a few upstarts agitators. They are being treated as friends and not as enemies. This can be seen from the careful way in which the British government is considering their welfare. England has assumed the responsibility of protecting the holy places of Islam and fulfilled it admirably.

The efforts undertaken by the British and the Indian government are well known. It is but natural that the Muslims feel bad about certain things that are not to their liking and for this a true wellwisher like me feels certain compassion. Some Hindu and Muslim leaders have started prejudicing public opinion, raising doubts about the sincere efforts undertaken by the British government. This is very bad indeed. Because of this, people have started disliking the government. This is not a good thing at all. Having considered this, His Exalted Highness Nizam Saheb has asked his subjects not to participate in this movement. I hope that his example will be followed in British India and elsewhere. How can the degraded and self proclaimed leaders convince the remaining Muslims that they should disregard Nizam, Arabs and even Turks and follow these leaders? If majority of Muslims start the movement, then the Indian leaders helping them could be justified. But do not participate in the unlawful and illegal movement headed by a few discontented people and cause your own downfall. Do not disturb the social order of traditional Hindu - Muslim unity that was cemented during the recent war fought together. Not co-operating with the government is as good as stopping one's own progress, destabilizing the societal base. If the government runs well then we shall get opportunities for bettering our physical, religious and moral conditions. I hope, that those who want their nation to

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prosper will not participate in any such movement.

The degree of Swarajya that we have got under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms was not offered to us by any of the previous Conferences. We must not misuse it. We must use it well and prove ourselves to the Emperor. We must pray for his long life. We must elect good leaders. We must make a success of the Reforms. We, and not the government, shall be reponsible for the consequences, if we elect wrong kind of leaders. We must achieve social and religious progress. There are several conflicting groups amongst us, mainly due to casteism. We must end them. We should treat everybody on equal terms, we should educate everybody, we should acknowledge everybody's right to Faith. The present Conference should think about how to implement these things. The so called Brahmins will help in this task. We shall be grateful to our wellwishers. The non-Brahmins should also end the differences amongst them and actively practise social unity and religious tolerence, making use of the opportunity presented today. This Conference is a new venture. We must take care and act accordingly, lest we are accused of wasting time and money.

Our cause of securing rights for the non-Brahmins is just. It is also religious because it is inspired by piety. It definitely has divine blessings, so let's get down to work. I am ready to serve you all. I am sure that God will grant us success in our endevour.

●●

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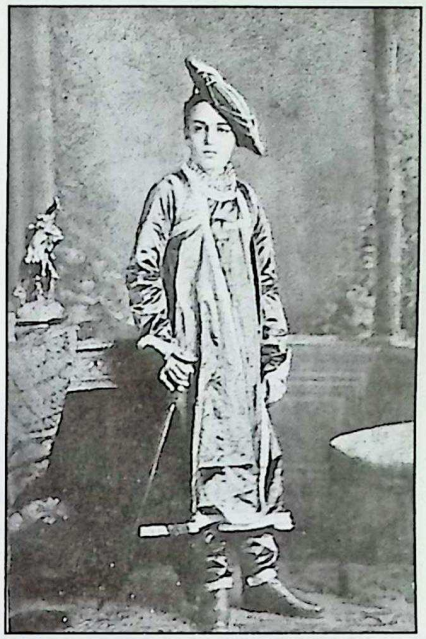
Part I : Shahu Chhatrapati : From Childhood to the End

Shahu at the age of 7



Shahu at the age of 11

Shahu at the age of 12
at Rajkot

Shahu at the age of 15
at Dharwad

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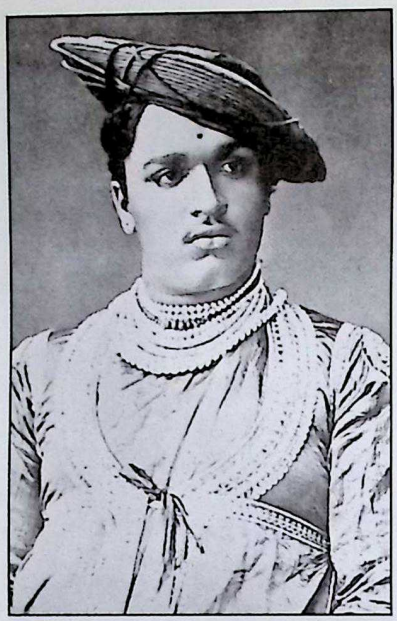
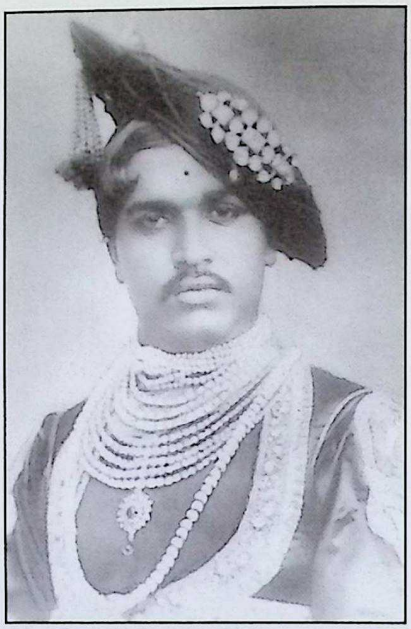
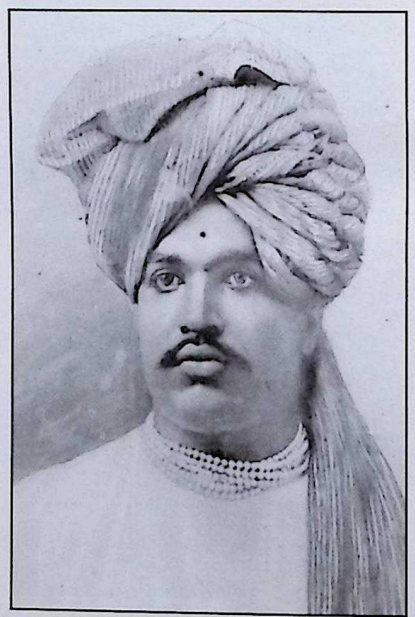


Shahu at the age of 20
At the time of Accession



Shahu at the age of 22

Shahu at the age of 24



Shahu at the age of 25

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Shahu in England : 1902

Shahu in *Fej* Cap

Shahu in royal attire :
England : 1902

Shahu in royal attire :
England : 1902

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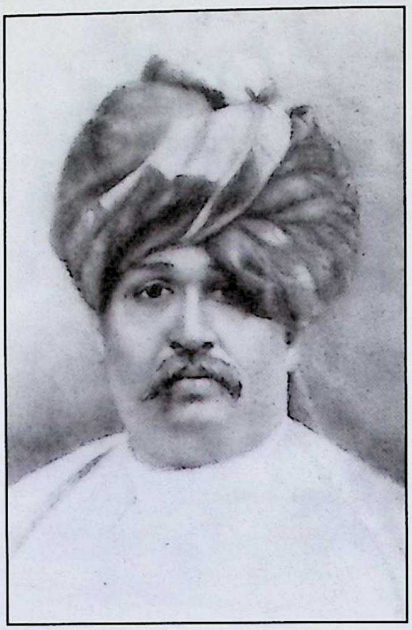
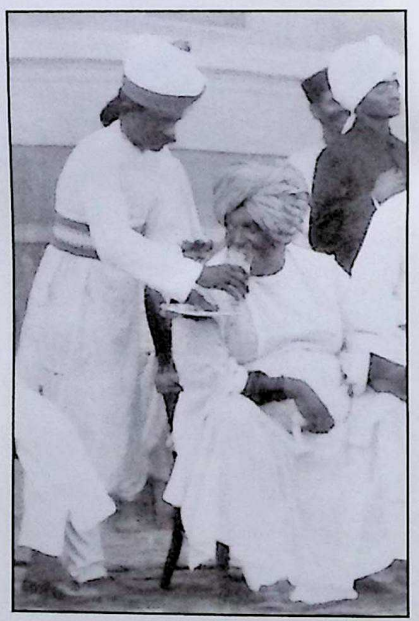
Shahu in royal attire



Shahu in simple dress

Shahu during his last days of life



The last Photograph of Shahu : Baroda : May 1922

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Part II : Shahu Chhatrapati and his Royal Family

Shahu's Great Grand Father :
Chh. Shivaji III (Babasaheb) :
1838 - 1866

Shahu's Great Grand Mother :
Ahilyabai Ranisaheb : Death 1895

Shahu's Grand Father :
Chh. Rajaram : 1866-1870

Shahu's Grand Mother :
Sakwarbai Ranisaheb

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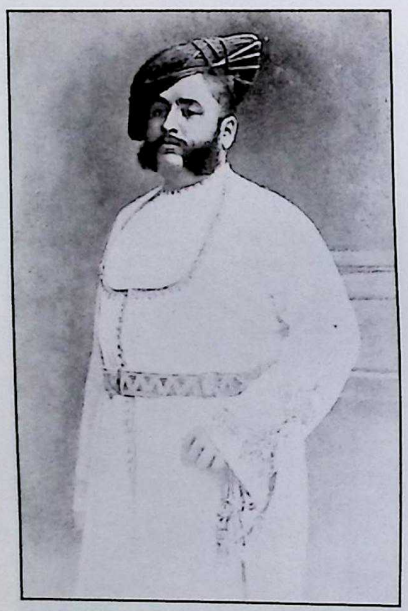
Shahu's Father :
Chh. Shivaji IV : 1871 - 1883

Shahu's Mother : Anandibai
Ranisaheb : Death 1902



Shahu's Biological Father :
Jaysingrao (Abasaheb) Ghatge :
Death 1886

Shahu's Biological Mother :
Radhabaisaheb :
Death : 1877

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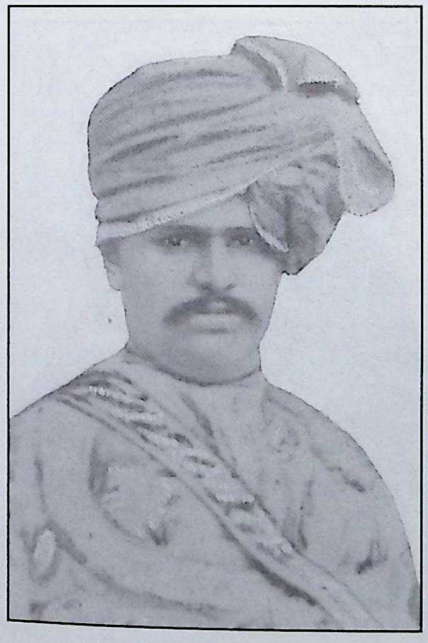
Shahu with his Medals
of Titles

Shahu's Queen :
Laxmibai Ranisaheb : Death 1945



Shahu's Elder Son :
Chh. Rajaram : 1922-1940

Shahu's Elder Daughter-in-law :
Tarabai Ranisaheb :
Death -1954

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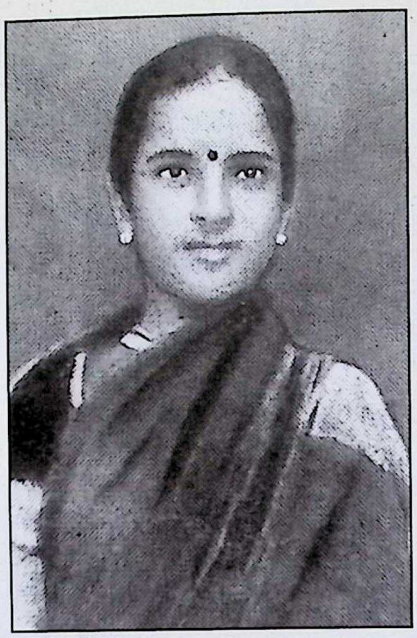
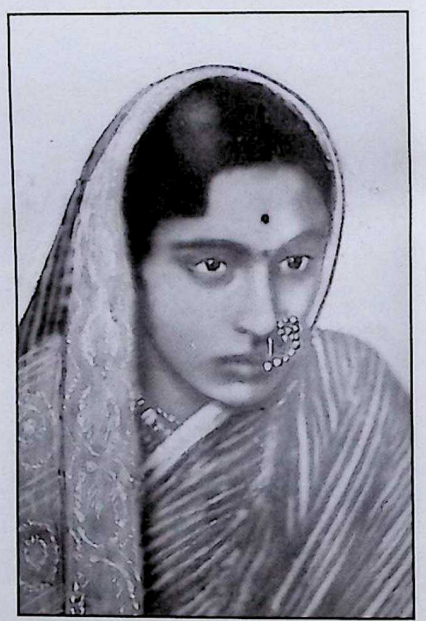
Shahu's Younger Son : Prince Shivaji : Death 1918



Shahu's Younger Daughter- in-law : Indumati Ranisaheb

Shahu's Son-in-law : Tukojirao Pawar : Devas



Shahu's Daughter : Radhabai (Akkasaheb)

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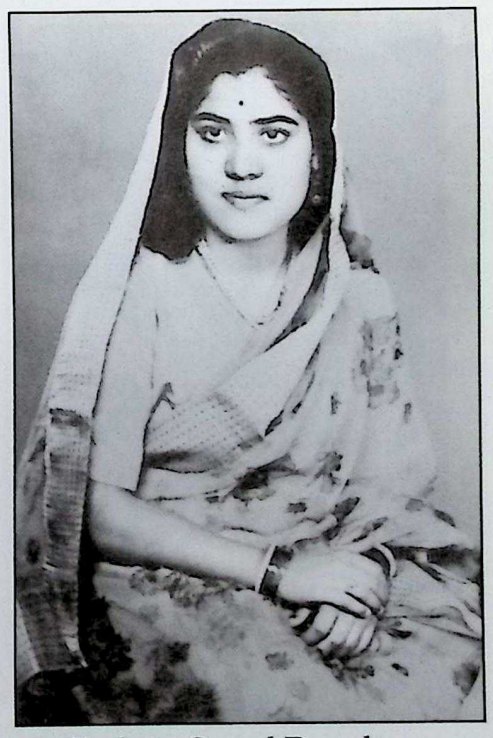
Shahu's Grand Son : Vikramsingh Pawar : The last Chhatrapati Shahaji Maharaj

Shahu's Daughter -in-law : Queen of Chh. Shahaji : Pramilaraje

Part III : Shahu Chhatrapati and his Royal Family -2

Shahu's Daughter-in-law : Queen of Chh. Rajaram : Vijaymala Ranisaheb



Shahu's Grand Daughter : Chh. Rajaram's Daughter : Princess Padmaraje

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Shahu's Younger Brother
Pirajirao (Bapusaheb) Ghatge

Shahu's Sister-in-law : Wife
of Bapusaheb : Tarabaisaheb

Shahu's Uncle :
Kakasaheb Ghatge

Shahu's Cousin : Daughter of
Kakasaheb : Chandraprabhabai

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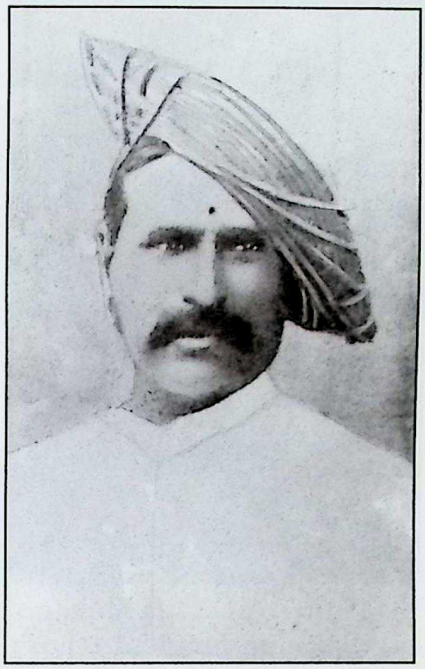
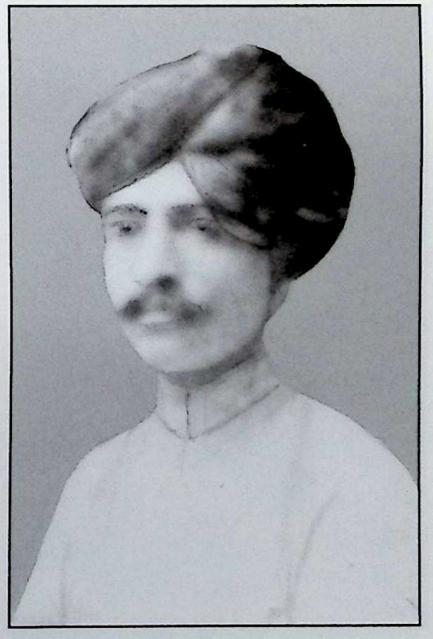
Part IV - Shahu Chhatrapti : His Friends & Companions

Shahu's Classmates at Dharwad



Shahu's Gaurdian at Rajkot & Dharwad : Buvasaheb Ingale

Shahu's Classmate & Close Friend : Bhavsinhaji Maharaj of Bhavnagar



Malharrao alias Bapusaheb Gaikwad, Rao Vishwasrao : Shahu's Trustworthy Campanion

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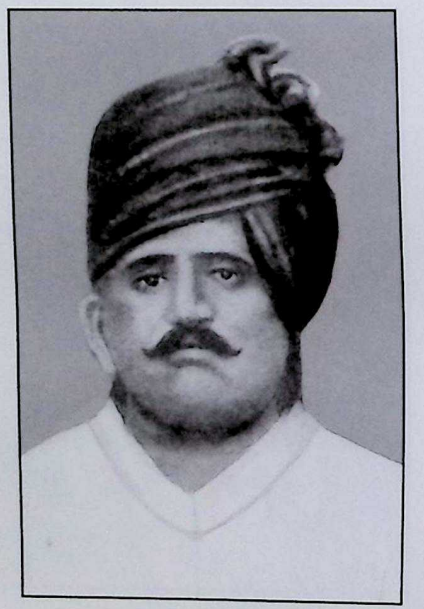
Shahu's A.D.C. & Shikar
Superitendent
Dattajirao Ingale (Sr.)

Shahu's Dy. Diwan &
Close Associate :
Khanderao (Balasaheb) Gaikwad



Shahu's Brother-in-law : Babasaheb
(Mamasaheb) Khanvilkar

Shahu's Darbar Mankari &
Trustworthy Campanion

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Shahu's Close Relative and Friend Kedarrao (Appasaheb) Shinde Mhaisalkar

Shahu's Principled Friend : Balasaheb Patwardhan of Kurundwad (Sr.)

Shahu's very close friend and Rajguru of the Royal Family : Raghupati Pandit Maharaj

Bala Maharaj : the Brother of Raghupati Pandit Maharaja

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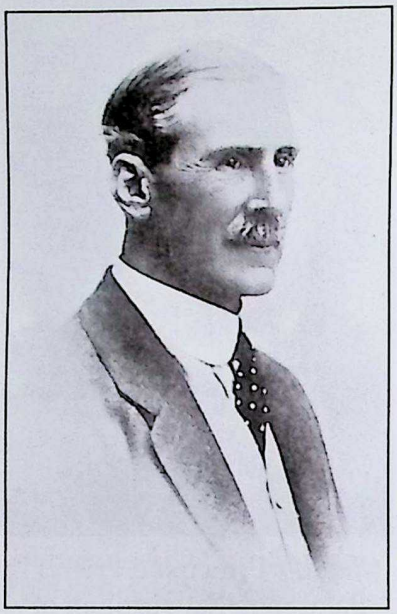
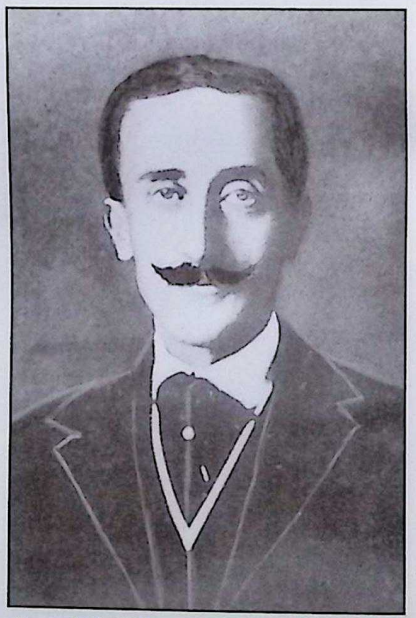
Part V : Shahu Chhatrapati and his British Friends



Shahu's 'Friend, Philospher
& Guide':
Sir. S. M. Fraser : ICS

Col. W. B. Ferris
Political Agent : 1901-1908

Sir Claude Hill :
A dutiful British Officer



Lord Willingdon : Governor
of Bombay

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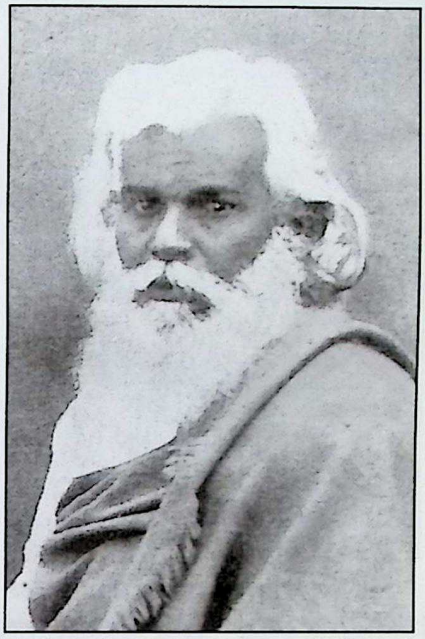
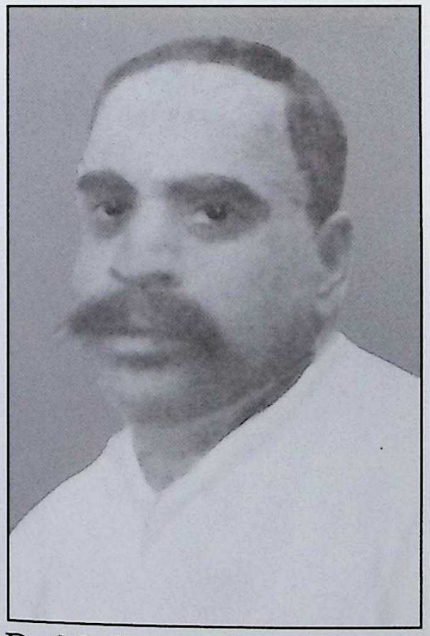
Part VI : Shahu Chhatrapati and his Colleagues in Social Field

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : National leader of the Depressed Classes



Maharshi Vittal Ramaji Shinde Follower of Brahmo Samaj and Principled Social worker



Dr. Madhavan Nair : Founder of the non-Brahmin Movement in Madras

Khaserao Jadhav : Senior Officer of Baroda and Fervent Social Worker

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Sir Raghunathrao Sabnis : Shahu's Guru, Guide & Adviser : Diwan of Kolhapur

Hon. Bhaskarrao Jadhav : Shahu's Trusted Officer and great leader of Satyashodhak and Non-Brahmin movements

Rao Bahadur Dajirao Amrut Vichare : Executive Engineer of Kolhapur & Shahu's Trusted Associate

Jiwajirao Savant : Versatile leader of Maratha Community

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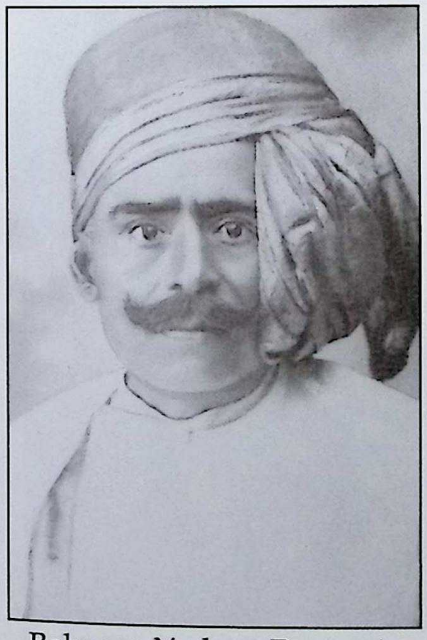
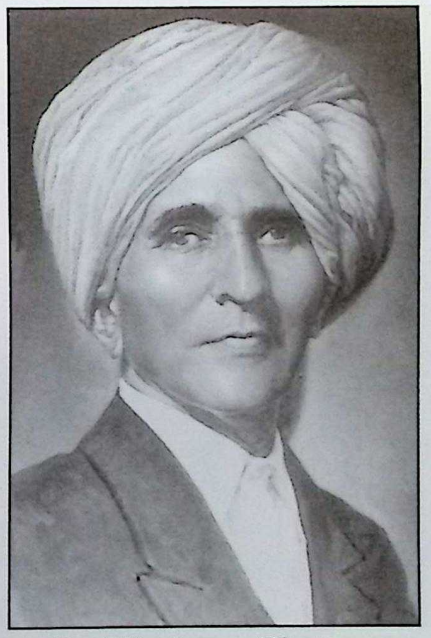
Diwan Bahadur Annasaheb
Latthe Leader of
Satyashodhak
Samaj & Non-Brahmin Party

Sadashivrao Patil Benadikar :
Kshatra Jagadguru



Baburao Yadav : Dynamic
Leader and scathing orator of
Satyashodhak Samaj



Dr. Hindurao Ghatge :
Principled Activist of
Maratha Community

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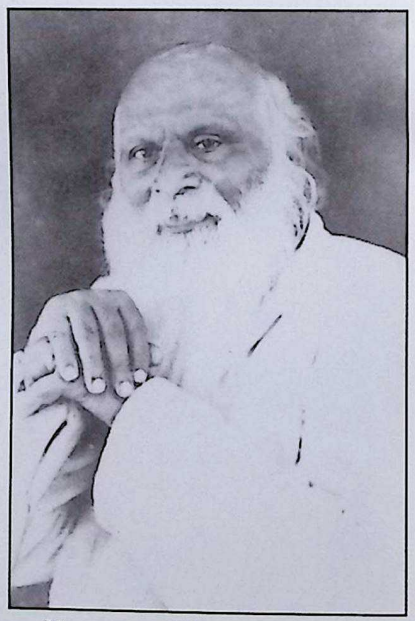
Kritivanrao Nimbalkar :
Satya Shodhak Activist &
Journalist

Raosaheb D. R. Bhosale
Educational Activist

Vasudeorao Tophkhane :
Follower of Theosophy &
Shahu's close friend



Karmveer Bhaurao Patil :
Stauch Satyashodhak Activist
& Educational Revolutionary

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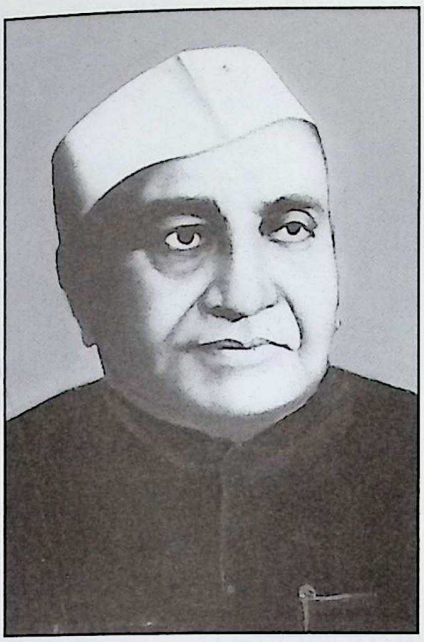
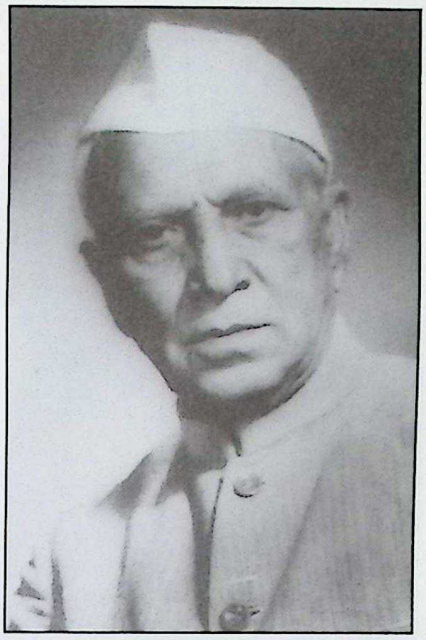


Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh : Leader of Berar. Great Educationalist and Agriculturalist



Dattoba Pawar : Leader of Depressed Classes & Dr. Ambedkar's Colleague

Prabodhankar K. C. Thackeray : Fearless and Truth-seeking Journalist, Versatile writer and Shahu's Friend

Mukundrao Patil : Satyshodhak and Principled Journalist. Gifted writer.

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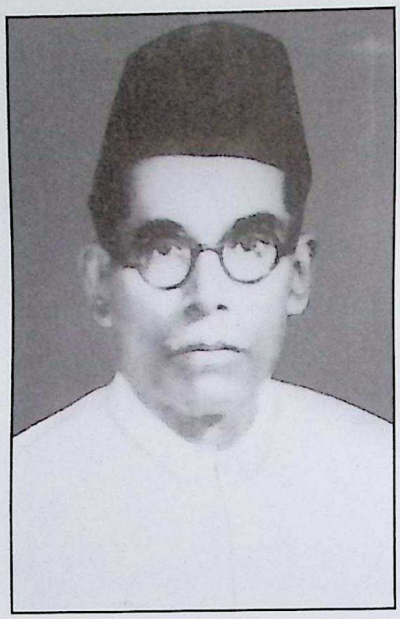

Shripatrao Shinde : Staunch Satya Shodhak, Journalist & Leader of Non-Brahmin Party

Shamrao Desai : Principled Journalist & Satyashodhak activist, Belgaum

Bhagvantrao Palekar : Nationlist Journalist, Satyashodhak Leader, Baroda

Rakhamabai Kelavkar : First Native Woman Education Officer of Kolhapur : 1885 - 1922

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Ganmahrshi Alladiya Khansaheb.
Gaurishankar of Indian Music

Hyderkhansaheb : Younger Brother
of Alladiya Khansaheb,
Illustrious Musician

Manjikhansaheb : Son of
Alladiya Khansaheb
and Noted Musician

Surhshri Kesarbai Kerkar :
Disciple of Alladiya Khansaheb,
Felicitated by Gurudeo
Ravidranath Tagore

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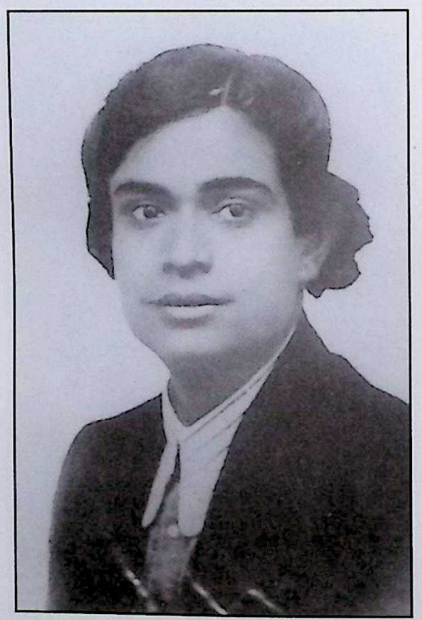
Anjanibai Malpekar :
All India Fame Singer

Mogubai Kurdikar :
Disciple of Alladiya Khansaheb &
Prominent Musician

Narayanrao Rajhansa alias
Balgandharva : Divined
Artist blessed by Shahu



Sangeetsurya Keshavrao Bhosale :
Prodigious Singer, Great Artist
loved by Shahu

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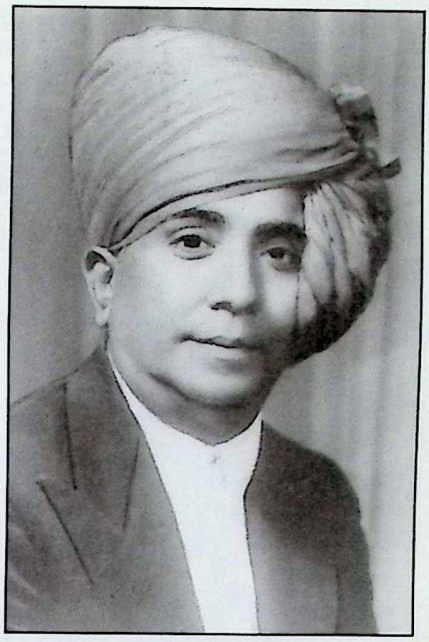
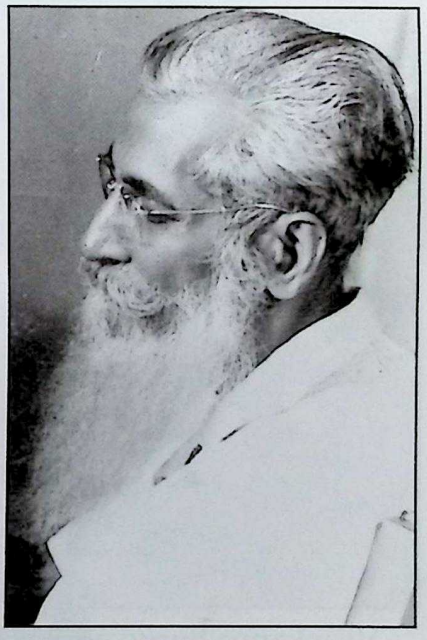
Govindrao Tembe :
Versatile Artist, Dramatist,
Poet, Musician



'*Maharashtra Kokil*' Shankarrao
Sarnaik, Renowned Singer

Rangsamrat Abalal Rahiman :
Eminent Artist



Kalamahrshi Baburao Painter :
Genius of Arts

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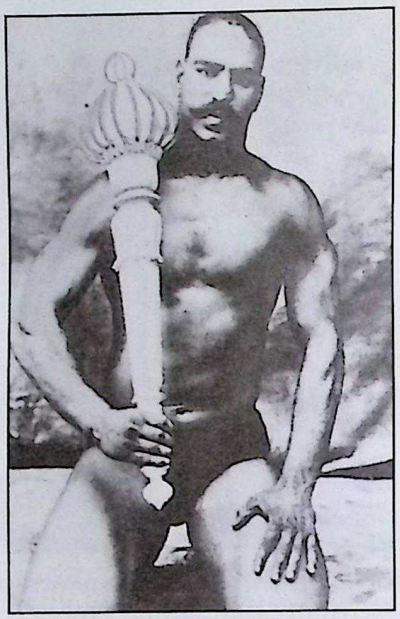
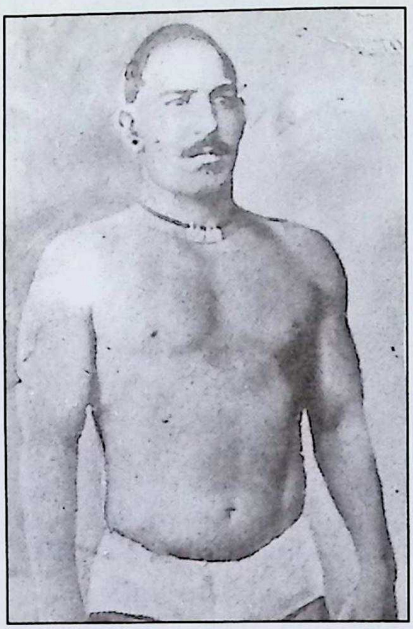
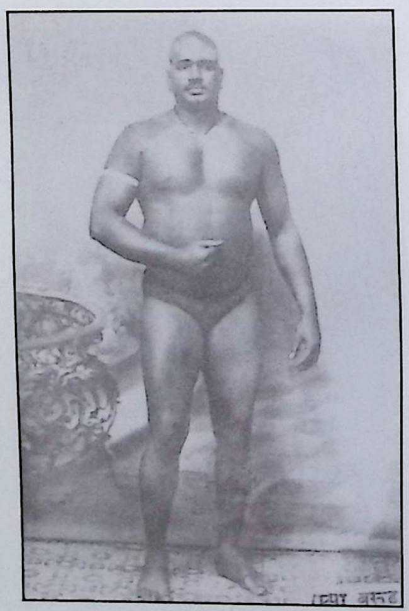
Part VIII : Shahu Chhatrapati and Famous wreslers under his Patronage



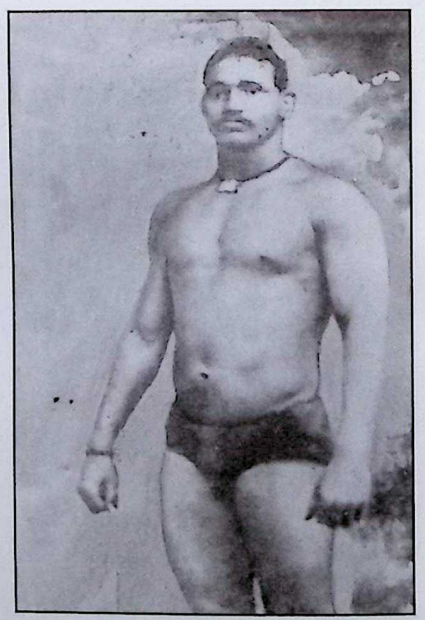
Imam Bux : one of the
Greatest Wrestlers of his time



Gulam Mohiddin : Fighting
Wresler from Panjab



Vyankappa Burud alias
'Kala Maruti' :
Invincible Wrestler



Ganpat Shinde : Distinguished
Wrestler of Kolhapur

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Part IX : Shahu Chhatrapati and some important Events in his life

Shahu & his Classmates at Dharwad :From left : Kakasaheb Ghatge, Bapusaheb, Bhausinghaji, Kalubha, Shahu & Dattajirao Ingle

Shahu at the time of his Accession to Throne : April 2, 1894

Shahu at Winchester, England : Receiving a Guard of Honour : June 12, 1902

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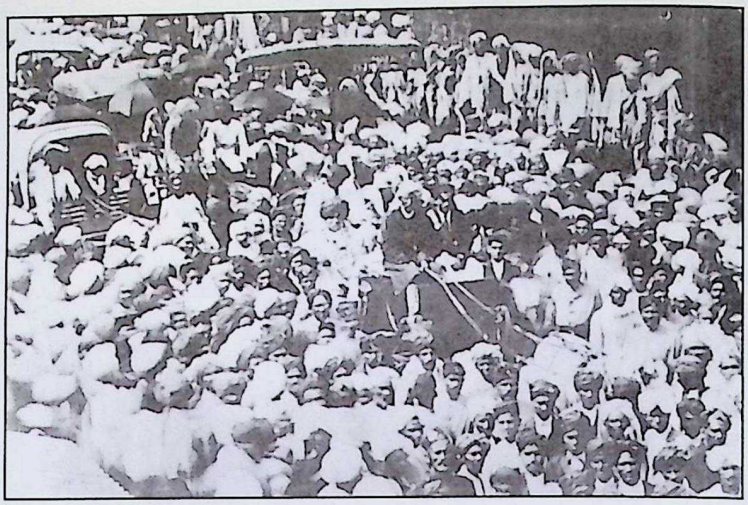
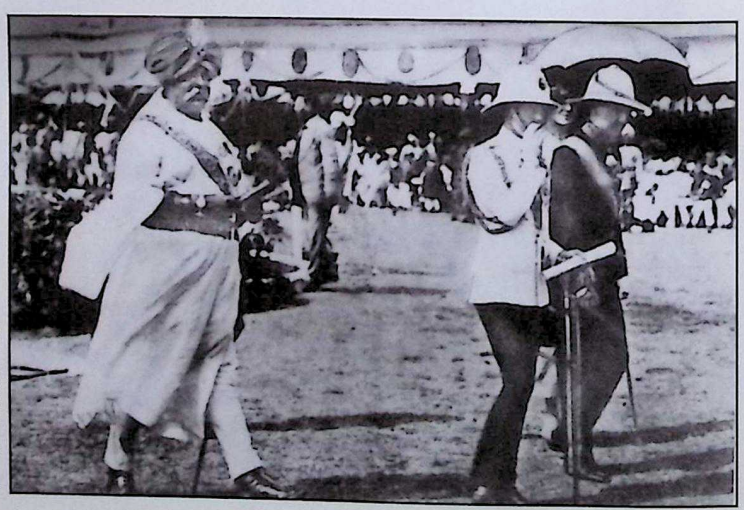


Huge Procession of Shahu at the Karnataka Non-Brahmin Social Conference in Hubli : July 26, 1920

Shahu and his colleagues with His Holiness Shri Siddharudha Swami at the Karnatak Non Brahmin Conference : Hubli : July 27, 1920



Shahu with the Prince of Wales while laying down foundation stone of Shivaji Memorial, Pune : November 19, 1921

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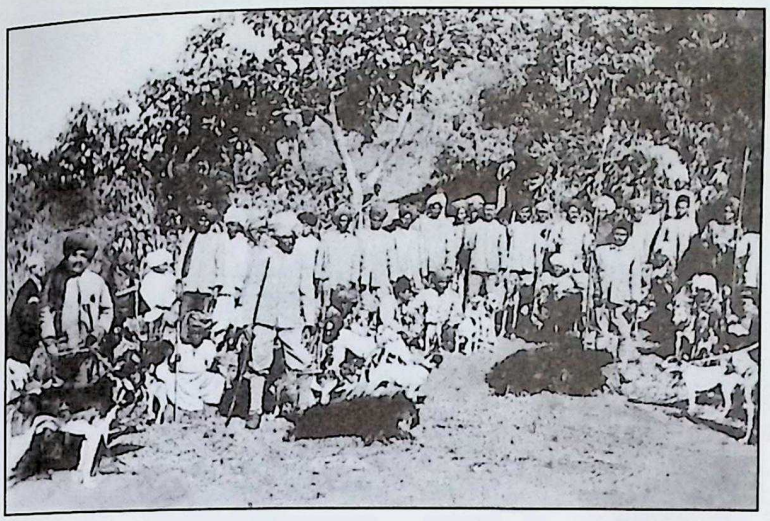
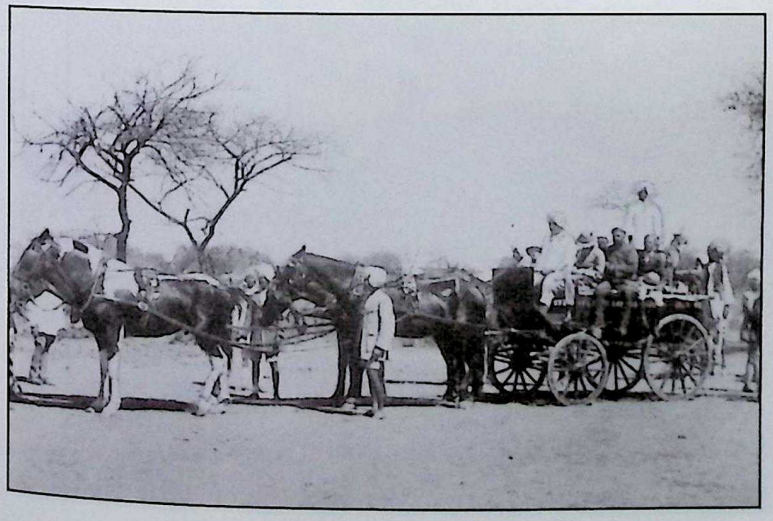
Part X : Shahu Chhatrapati and Shikar



Shahu at Shikar (Hunting)
: Hunted Bears

Shahu at Shikar :
His hounds killed a tiger : The
First event of its kind in India -1910
Sir Fraser congratulated Shahu.



Shahu at the start of
Cheetah hunting :
Himself driving a coach

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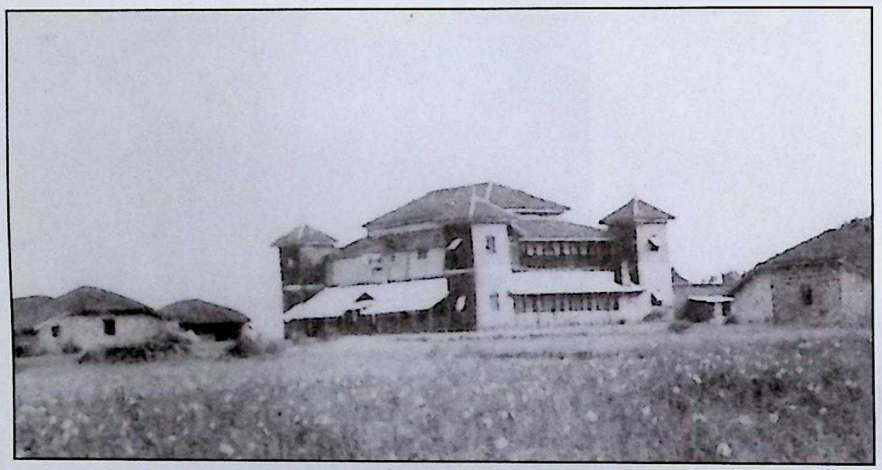
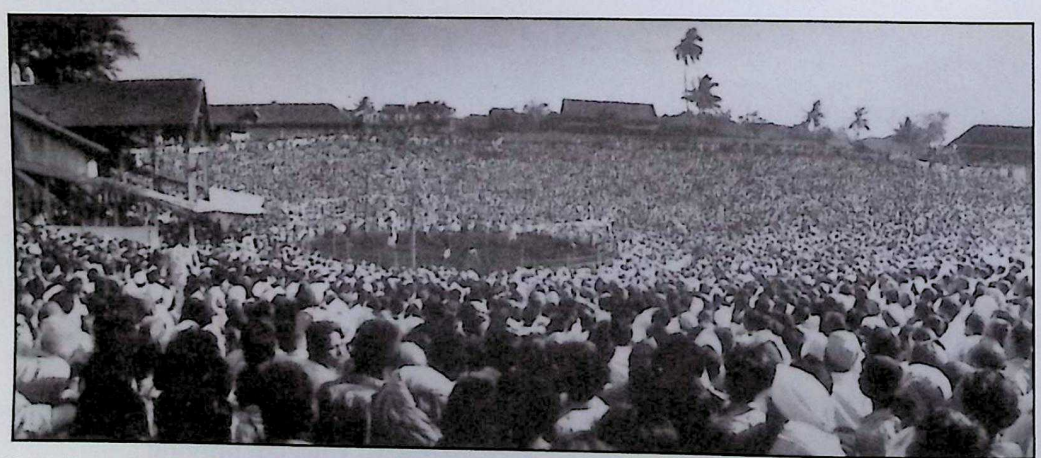
Part XI : Shahu Chhatrpati and Historical Places

New Palace :
Shahu's Residence



Sontali : Shahu's Ashramlike Abode : 1918 - 1922



Khasbaug Maidan : Shahu's Wrestling arena designed on lines of Roman arena : 1912

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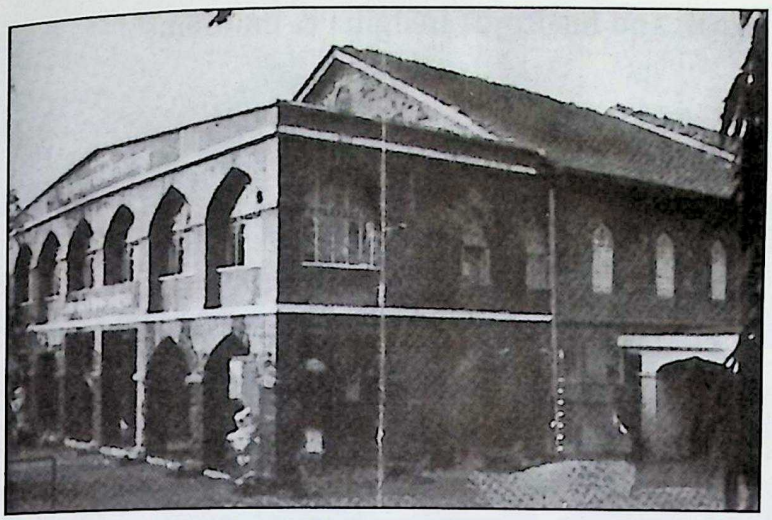
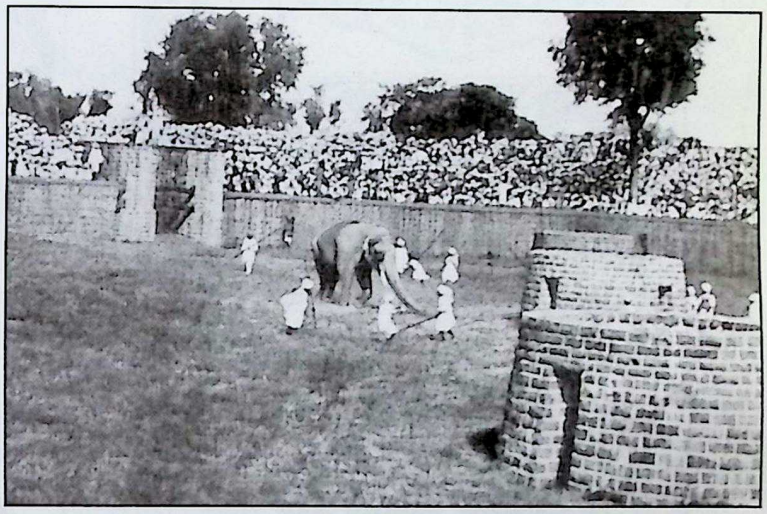
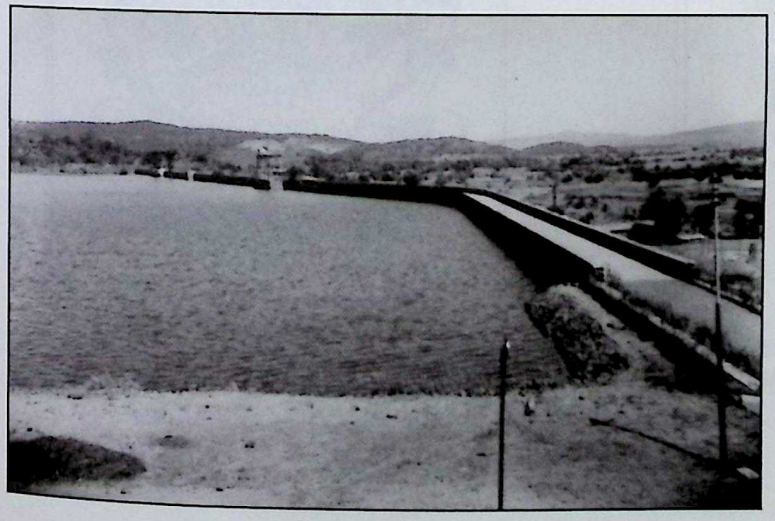


Palace Theatre : First Grade Theatre in India 1915



Sathamari : Elephant Fighting arena : Shahu developed a technique of the game.



Shahu's Life Mission : Radhanagari Dam : The biggest dam in India

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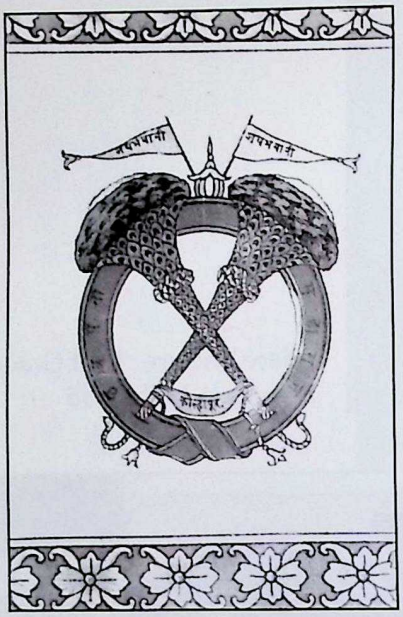
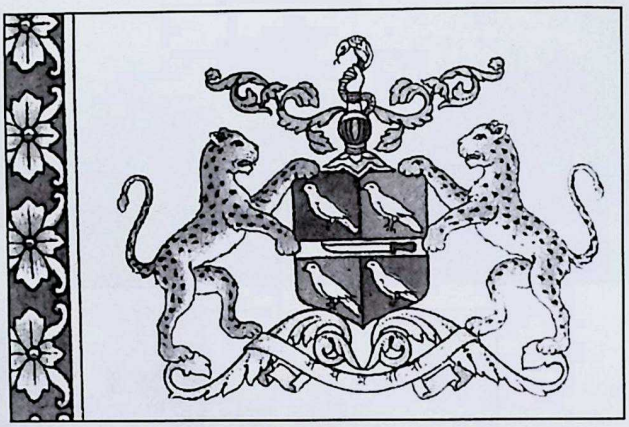
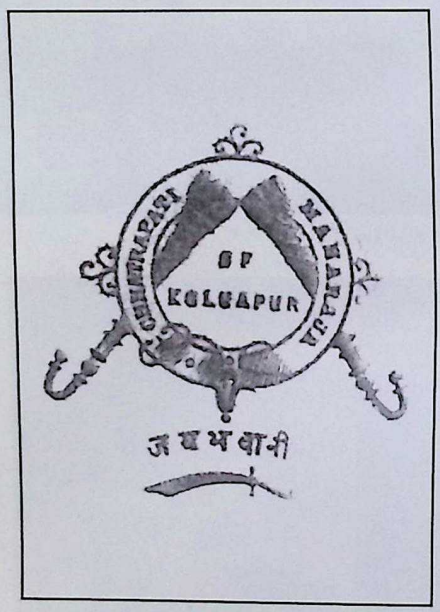
Part XII : Shahu Chhatrpati and his Royal Insignia & Emblems



Kolhapur Chhatrapati's Insignia



Kolhapur Chhatrapati's Insignia



Shahu's Emblem on his Darbar Correspondence

Shahu's Emblem on his Private Correspondence

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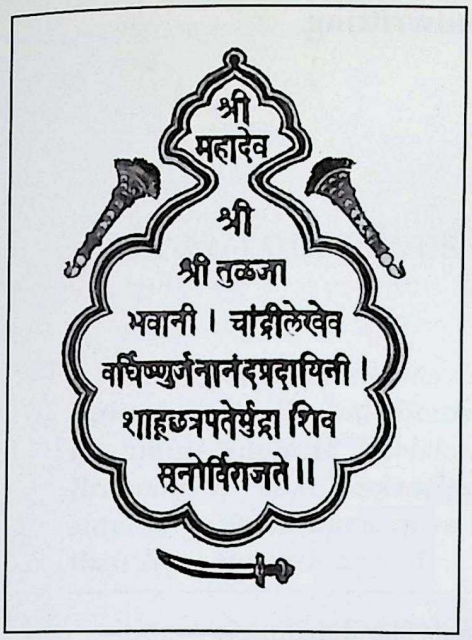

Shahu's Sanskrit Seal

Emblem of Queen Laxmibai

Emblem of Queen Laxmibai

Emblem of Indumati Ranisaheb :
Daughter-in-law of Shahu

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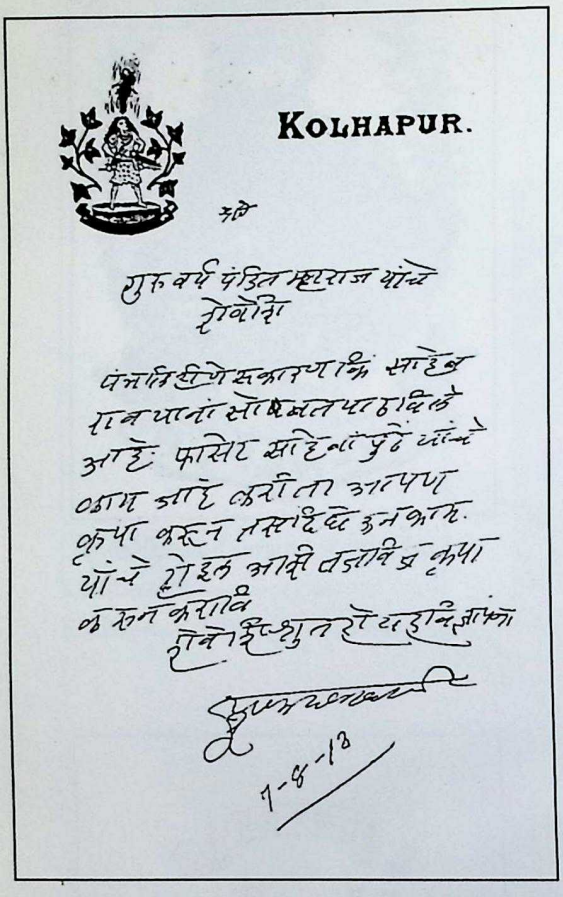
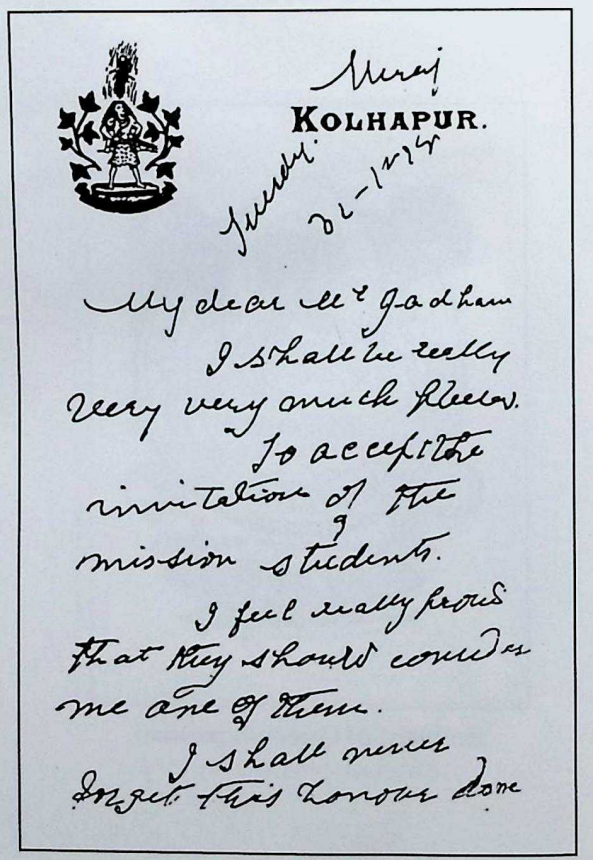
Part XIII : Shahu's Handwritting


KOLHAPUR.

Shahu's Handwriting in Marathi : 1913


KOLHAPUR.

Shahu's Handwriting in English : 1914

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14

Free Yourselves from Intellectual Bondage

The present speech was delivered by Shahu on 27th July 1920 in Hubli, Karnataka in the valedictory session of Karnatak Brahmanetar (non-Brahmin) Samajik Parishad. In this speech, Shahu has asked non-Brahmins to make a relentless effort to free themselves from intellectual slavery imposed upon them by the Brahmins; and if need be lay down their lives for such a freedom.

Some years ago, a few Brahmin leaders, pretending to be socially aware, made noises that primary education should be provided by the government. But what did they actually do? They just spoke. Now take another example. They started a movement, continued it and even got a commission appointed to see if the I.C.S. examination could be held in India. Luckily they did not succeed. Try and understand the hidden truth in it. If they were sincere about primary education, they could have raised a fund for primary education and started sending teachers to villages; just as they did in case of the I.C.S. examination. A lot of money can be procured for opening colleges and I.C.S. issue; but they do not have money for primary education. Why? Because the truth is the non-Brahmins would benefit from this.

Institutions like Anath Balikashram are built with public funds. But if you scrutinise the rules prevailing there, you can easily see that only the Brahmins benefit. Take for example the rule which says that only the girls from such castes that do not follow the practice of widow remarriage are eligible for admission to the institution. Only two castes fall in this category; Brahmin and Maratha. Most of the Maratha families follow *purdah;* so that leaves only Brahmins. The non-Brahmins should only contribute money but not expect any benefits. Don't be taken in by such Brahminical strategy. Be responsible for your education and start forward on the road to progress.

This is just the beginning of Brahmin-non-Brahmin conflict. The newspapers have started maligning me. The newspapers are daily publishing threats and uncivil things about me and my family. If I cannot be cowed down and if I refuse to stop supporting the cause, they threaten to use the same lowly, cowardly and uncivilized weapons they used against

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Rand, Jackson and Jadhavrao, on me. Let God grant them their wish to use such coward and inhuman weapons!

The progress of non-Brahmins is so unbearable to certain jealous people that they have this desire to hinder this march to progress. Is it so that the Hubli bazaar fire and destruction of Shri Nandi idol last night was done purposely in order to create hinderence in our path? But let's not lose heart because of such instances. We shall not be discouraged but shall show more enthusiasm. Such efforts will bring us closer; of this I have no doubt.

I need not repeat here how progress became possible under the British regime. Shri Pratapsinha Maharaja, when young was a captive of the Peshwas and he was not allowed to learn. His wise and revered mother arranged for him to learn to read and write from a non-Brahmin teacher and would wake him up in the middle of the night to take lessons. After the decline of Peshwai and advent of the British regime, he undertook efforts to re-establish his rights as a Kshatriya and check the undue importance given to the Brahmins. The angry Brahmins then indulged in intrigue, prejudicing the British against him and he was dethroned. They are threatening me with the same consequences today. But I have full faith in the justness of the Almighty and the British government and compassionate nature of friends like you and so I shall continue fulfilling my duties calmly.

The 'Smritis' have described the Brahmin as follows: Brahmin is always occupied by the knowledge. But is it possible to find even a single such person amongst today's Brahmins? I doubt. How can a person undertaking such lowly deeds as described above be called a Brahmin? Am I wrong in expressing doubts about the existance of real Brahmins in today's world? The Kshatriyas have proved that they are not extinct by participating in the War. The Vaishya have aquired wealth in trade. The poor Sudras are subsisting by serving others. But only Brahmins have given up their duties, so now they do not have a place in the ancient *Varna* system, even the proudest defenders of *Varnashram* will have to agree to this.

What we ought to do, I shall tell you in short. More and more non-Brahmin conferences like the present one should be arranged. We should learn from Madrasi, how to run the non-Brahmin movement successfully. Let us invite speakers from Madras. Show them what is being done in Pune-Mumbai. I am sure they will come. Arrange a non-Brahmin conference soon in Mumbai or Pune. The non-Brahmin movement in Pune and Mumbai is far behind the Madras movement. Our leaders are like children in terms of experience compared to non-Brahmin leaders there.

Dear Brothers, unite, struggle and free yourself from the intellectual slavery! Lay down your lives for freedom, do what you will, but free yourself from those who treat you like animals. Unite, forgetting all the petty differences and struggle hard. Follow only those deeds that are acceptable to God. Do not be unjust. Let's march ahead with the help of our bretheren from Madras.

What political aims can we achieve if we do not show any patience and consistancy in social reforms? What value is our loyalty if we are not stable politically? So concentrate on social and religious reforms and build the nation, then the political reforms can catch speed and then your loyalty will become worthwhile.

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The Brahmins will try and scare you. They will badmouth you and your family. You must resist this. I told in one of my speeches in Nagpur that people from certain castes will come forward to help you. Do not trust them and give up your efforts. "Those who rely on others are doomed to sink". My non-Brahmin Brothers, many Brahmins will come forward to help you but please do not rely on them.

At the Maratha Education Conference in Khamgaon I had asked for Communal Representation for ten years. It was not sanctioned. So do not lose hope. We don't need the alms of "Communal Representation". We will first deserve and then desire. Because of Communal Representation, we could have been eligible in a shorter span of time. Now we must struggle hard with our Brahmin brothers for obtaining our rights. One of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen would emmerge ten times stronger after every defeat. Let's understand the essence of this. The more resistance we suffer, the more hinderences we face, the harder we should work and suceed.

●●

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15.

Exessive Caste Pride should be Curbed!

On August 15, 1920, Shri Rajaram Industrial School in Kolhapur had organized an exhibition of modern agricultural implements and industrial tools. Alongwith this the Aarya Kshatriya Samaj from Kolhapur had organized their caste conference. This is a speech delivered by Shahu as a chief guest of both these events. Shahu has emphasized that though industry undoubtedly plays an important role in the progress of a nation, modern implements should be used even in agriculture to make it profiatable, especially in a country like India, where 80% population is dependant on agriculture. He also warns that excessive caste pride should be curbed because there is a larger society outside one's caste and it is the responsibility of every one to serve that society.

I am extremely glad to chair the session and encourage you.

I read some information just now about your aims , objectives and activities. It is indeed very interesting and informative. The manual skill of you people is well known. I always remember people from your caste, when such skill is needed. I am glad to say that several things that I daily use are made by the skilled craftsmen of your caste. I am proud to have such skilled artisans amongst my subjects. The crafts exhibition is also extremely enlightening in this respect. It can be clearly seen, what we can do. This exhibition is also an eye-opener for the Swadeshi followers as it amply shows, how many things can be made here, if one has to follow the Swadeshi. The Western world has also shown us, how necessary it is to organize such an event to encourage the local crafts and skills. Such national fairs are usually organized there on the occasion of any such festival. This exhibition of yours is indeed admirable and it will guide the novice. It is also useful for the customer as it makes him aware about the things on sale and where to get them.

It is a universally accepted principle that a nation's progress depends entirely on the development of industry. I like to encourage industry and you know of the measures I have taken in that direction.

India is an agrarian nation basically. Agriculture is the main occupation of its people. Nearly 80% people in India subsist on agriculture. The artisans

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here are highly skilled undoubtedly, but they cannot compete with machines prevailing in present times. In the Western world there is a conflict between the capitalists and the labour. Until recently, the capitalists had an upper hand. Now it is the labour's turn. They are organized to put forward their demands and these demands could be granted because they are united. But even today, the position of the labour in these countries is not good. Such type of labour class should emmerge in India (for exploitation by caopitalists)is not acceptable to me. That thousands of people should depend on selfishness and whims of a capitalist is not fair at all. Hence this type of industry prevailent in the West would not be beneficial in our country.

People cannot subsist on agriculture. The number of people migrating to the cities because agriculture is not sufficient to feed them is increasing day by day. The villages are deserted and the cities are overflowing. Hence the health facilities in the cities are deteriorating, which in turn is affecting the villages. That is why those who wish well of this country should concentrate on improvement of agriculture. Compared to other countries, our average agricultural output is much less. There is a lot of scope to improve this. It is always better to employ a larger proportion of population in agriculture. The excess can go into the industry.

In order to improve agriculture, better ploughs are necessary. I am glad to see that you have paid attention to this. If skilled people like you put your mind to it, I am sure that the shortcoming will be soon removed. Better ploughing and irrigation devices will help every farmer. I must congratulate you on your efforts in that direction. Rest assured that I shall offer every possible help in fulfilling your goals.

The spread of education in one's caste is a duty of each and every one. Hostels for students is a speciality of Kolhapur. Hardly any other city can boast of so many hostels. This is a commendable effort and is praiseworthy.

I need not say more about the industrial school. Several skills were lost because of the malpractice of imparting skills only to one's children. Knowledge can never be protected by being secretive. Keeping knowledge secret was a mistake first committed by our Brahmin brethern. Others followed them. Because of this practice, the Knowledge of Brahmins became stunted, the non-Brahmins were thrown into the darkness of ignorance and the artisans lost their skills. It is good that now you are accepting students from other castes to this school and imparting these techniques to them. This shows that you have realized the maistake made earlier and have taken measures to rectify it.

Casteism is the biggest disease India is suffering from. I have said so openly. Continuous efforts on my part to destroy casteism are on. In this case my encouraging your caste based endevours goes against what I preach, or so some would accuse me; hence it would not be out of turn to say a few words on this. To a certain extent it is very difficult to destroy casteism and caste chauvinism. Man takes care of his family and one cannot blame him for this. But man is certainly to be blamed if he cannot see anything beyond his family. Feeling responsible for the development of the group, where you are born is all right. But there is a society, a great society outside that group and one must keep in mind that one has to serve it also. Hence it is essential to check the caste

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pride. Let's not forget, that we are Hindus and also responsible for the development of our nation. In short, caste pride should complement the national good and should not disregard the common national good.

From the history of your caste narrated here, it can be seen that each one of you have progressed because of the skills and because of the patronage of some king or some prince. Because of such persons the kith and kin must have progressed too. But soon this state of affairs will be redundant because the power is being transferred to the majority. So today patronage from the people is better than royal patronage. Also gone are the days when each individual worked separately. People should pool in their skills, money, brains and labour together. In short people should cooperate. Earlier a family would work together and the profit generated would be consumed by the family. Today we must broaden the scope of the definition of family. 10/20/50 families should come together to do business. They should get wages according to their abilities and they should also get share in the profits. Learn to cooperate. Start cooperative credit facilities.I wish success to your school and to you in your enterprize. Rest assured that I shall always extend subsidies and facilities to you.

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16

Let us Exercise our Rights

Shau was the chief guest at the Third All India Conference of the Untouchable classes at Delhi on 16th Feb, 1922. Here he exhorts the 'untouchables' to capture new and prestigeous professions and emulate the example of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar in this respect.

I do not know your language well. I will try to express myself as well as I can. I hope you will forgive my broken language.

The honour of occupying the chair and addressing you today really belongs to Mr. Ambedkar who is one from among you and is better educated than myself. Unfortunately he cannot be amongst us at this conference as he is in England. But I am sure wherever he may be, nothing can be nearer his heart than the interest of the suffering fellow beings of his community.

At the outset let me congratulate you all for coming over here from far, leaving your homes and hearths for according a hearty welcome to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the heir to our most beloved King-Emperor George V, and be sure that His Royal Highness is delighted to see you and bears a deep affection towards you all.

You are also to be congratulated for the fact that you are all collected here to make a united effort for your progress in a peaceful way. It is really suggestive of the new spirit that has been created in you. If you continue incessantly this agitation of the new spirit, this effort of self progress, this tough flght for freeing yourself from the social degrading position, I feel quite sure that God will crown your efforts with success. I pray you not to stick to your hereditary professions alone. You must make an emphatic struggle to educate yourselves and enter into the army and the various other offices of several departments of government. Not only that but you should attain proficiency in all these lines such as law, medicine, trade & commerce and push yourselves forward.

In my tiny little kingdom people from your community are occupying such posts and are practising such professions, nay one of them is also a Chairman of the City Municipal Committee. I might be accused of

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self-praise for saying this, but I beg to be excused because I mention this only to show what people from among you can attain if only they strive. When His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will come once again amongst us and be quite sure that our affection will not fail to attract him, you will be able, I hope, to accord a hearty welcome to him as officers in the army and in the civil administration as well as leading members of independent professions. We must never forget that the cause of the new life and awakening amongst us is due to the liberal policy of the benign British Government that gives equal opportunity to all to educate themselves and makes no distinction of castes and creed. Under the New Reforms Act, many of you enjoy the privilege of voting. I hope you will wisely take full advantage of the New Reforms that have been granted to us by our kind Government and of the channel that has been opened for us by settling our political goal to the progressive realisation of self government for uplifting ourselves politically, socially, economically and morally.

Political destiny of any country depends upon the character of the people in that country, therefore supreme attempts should be made for building up the character especially of our youths and prove ourselves deserving of the new rights that have been bestowed upon us. I feel delighted to notice that you have good leaders from among yourselves and that you are led along by a peaceful and right path towards the realization of your cherished goal.

In the enthusiasm of the new spirit that is seen in the Indian Nation, let it be remembered that the Nation has not been forgotten by you. The ban of untouchability flung over you since ages is losing ground and I am sure a day will soon dawn when the ban will only be a by-gone word. You must learn to keenly watch your rights. Whenever you find your social rights are invaded you have to remain firm and guard your rights not in a spirit of fighting and hatred but in a spirit of wisdom and love. In order to be able to do all this peacefully we must co-operate with Government and take their help whenever necessary.

In this 20th Century it has been an acknowledged principle of the world that the way of progress and prosperity is not bloodshed and rebellion but a peaceful revolution. The International Conferences at Washington and Geneva are but expositions of this principle. Let us also then accept and follow the same principle.

You should all keep before you Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, your great leader, as your ideal and try to follow him, to be like him. My humble services are at your disposal. My only prayer is you should allow me to serve you.

I have humbly placed before you my thoughts in short. I am indebted to you for affording me an opportunity for doing so. Expressing my heartfelt thanks for the patient hearing you gave me, I beg to conclude....

●●

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Volume - II

Section - III

Selective Documents, Correspondence, Reports, Articles, Royal Decrees etc.

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Editorial Note

While editing this commemorative volume, we came across many personal documents and government records. These are being selectively presented for the benefit of the readers.

These documents relate to a wide variety of topics which range from invitation cards of the royal ceremonies to letters addressed to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The correspondence between Shahu-Ambedkar is significant as it throws light on the social movement prevalent then. It is interesting to note that Shahu has called Ambedkar "Lokmanya Ambedkar" and Ambedkar has described Shahu as "a pillar of Indian democratic movement".

The letters written by Shahu to Vichare, Annasaheb Latthe and Shridharpant Tilak unfold a multifaceted personality of the Maharaja. The one penned by him to Indumati Ranisaheb poignantly reflect his fatherly feelings towards the young widow.

These papers also include a pamphlet published by activists of Satyashodhak Samaj on the non-Brahmin movement in Kolhapur, description of the last journey of Shahu and many other subjects that can help in tracing the social history of this particular period.

The source of these papers is given at the bottom and important parts are mentioned in a bold type.

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(1)

Invitation card for Shahu's adoption ceremony

March 1,1884

Shahu, who originally belonged to Ghatge family at Kagal,was adopted in Kolhapur's Chhatrapati clan. He was adopted by Anandibai, the Rani of Shivaji IV. The following invitation card for the adoption ceremony was sent by Shahu's grandmother— Sakwarbaisaheb— to Ramchandra Pandit alias Baba Maharaja. This is an original document with historical importance.

This is broadly translated as follows.

To
Revered Shri Baba Maharaj,

Sakwarbaisaheb makes humble request. That all is well as of date 2 of month Jamaval and Shake 1805 (March 1, 1884). The new development is that it has been decided to adopt Yashwantrao , son of Jaysingrao Ghatge, as heir to the throne on *phalgun vadya panchami induwari (March 17,1884).* The clerk Ramchandra Narayan is carrying the invitation for you for the ceremony. Please attend the function. With respect.

Received on March 7, 1884

(From Guru Maharaj Collection)

(2)

Fraser appreciates Buwasaheb Ingle, Shahu's Guardian

April 13, 1894

Shahu was imparted education before coronation under the supervision and guidance of British civil officer S.M. Fraser who was assisted by Buwasaheb Ingle, guardian of Maharaja. In the following letter Fraser is all praise for the role played by Buwasaheb in the assigned work.

Kolhapur
April 13, 1894

My dear Buwa Saheb

As I am now leaving Kolhapur, I should like to send you a line to say a word about your services with H. H. the Rajah. **During the five years His Highness has been under my charge, you have been continuously present with him, at Dharwad, at Kolhapur, and during our tours in India and Ceylon, in the capacity of Mankari, and owing to your uprightness, purity of life and example, and mainly simplicity, I have always felt that I should entrust the young Maharajah and his brother with confidence to your companionship.** As a first-rate sportsman, whether in saddle, with gun or rifle, your presence has been particularly valuable, as when unable to accompany the boys myself, I felt I would always leave them safely to your care. We have had many pleasant days sports together and I hope we may have more hereafter, and in bidding you good-bye now I can assure you of my best wishes for your future prosperity.

Yours sincerely,
S. M. Fraser
I.C.S.

To,

Venkatrao (Buwa Saheb) Ingle.

(From Vijaysingh Hanmantrao Ingle collection)

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(3)

Historical Speech by Jiwajirao Sawant at the launch of the first Victoria Maratha Boarding at Kolhapur on

April 18,1901

This was the first boarding house in a series. Present were Bapusaheb Maharaj, Dajirao Vichare, Babasaheb Khanvilkar, Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Appasaheb Mhaisalkar and Jiwajirao Sawant. Sawant's speech reflects the agony in the minds of well educated Maratha leaders who are pained at the backwardness of their community. The inspiration of Shahu Maharaja behind the boarding project is evident. This is an extract of the speech.

A nation can be taken forward if there is equality in the social, moral and religious spheres of the society. The current scenario in our country in this regard is dismal.

We are here today to consider the status of Maratha Community in a social milieu of today which is the product of the ancient *Chaturvarnya* system based on *karma and swabhav.*

During the last three centuries Marathas have done good to not only Maharashtra but entire India. They flourished during Shivaji Maharaja's period as is known by everyone. But after the reign of Satara's Shahu Maharaj, Marathas started regressing and today their plight is miserable. It is now the responsibility of the educated and mature Marathas to improve this situation.

To change this situation and improve the lot of Marathas, the first step that should be taken to make them a vital organ of the nation , is to educate the community.

We are educationally backward. Talented boys and girls in our community remain deprived of education because of poverty. We must to something to educate these children.

It is felt in some quarters that setting up such caste based institutions gives rise to hatred among communities. But this is not true. Benefits of education to any particular caste and community will ultimately lead to harmony between various segments of the society. That is why many sub-castes like kayasthas, Gaud Brahmins as well as Muslims are setting up funds to spread education in their respective communities.

In European countries primary education is compulsory and children of the poor are taught at government expense. In England, France, Germany, even mill workers read newspapers! When I saw that during my stay in Europe, a thought came to my mind that our country would attain nationhood when education is spread to all segments of our society.

Many Maratha leaders like Balasaheb Gaikwad have been thinking for some time of the need to educate our people. This thought was supported by Bapusaheb Ghatge, Khanvilkar and others. With a view to spread education in Maratha community I now make a formal suggestion to set up 'Maratha Education Society'. This society , I feel, should start its work with the establishment of a boarding house for Marathas to be named as Victoria Maratha Students' Institution.

To run this institution efficiently and properly would mean working for welfare of Maratha community and we have been inspired in this cause by Chhatrapati Maharaja who is keen on

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spreading education in all communities. All Marathas living in not only Maharashtra but entire India would remain grateful to Maharaja who is the moving force behind our movement. We are hopeful that our suggestions in this regard would win his approval.

Those who sincerely feel that Marathas should better their lots are welcomed to contribute funds to this society irrespective of their caste and creed. To help in spread of education is supporting a worthy cause.

The sun of reforms among Marathas is today rising on the horizon. Clouds may come but the sun will clear them all, blazing at mid-noon and our community will bask in the glory of education. I pray to God to make our institution live long and for ever.

(Sri Shahu Chhatrapati Maratha Vidyarthi Vasatigruha- Diamond Jubilee Volume.)

(4)

Shahu to Vichare, a personal letter

Shahu writes this letter to the Chief Engineer of Kolhapur from Delhi where he was to attend the Grand Darbar on December 12,1911 to commemorate coronation of George V. On the previous day, Shahu was conferred the title of Grand Commander of the Indian Empire (G.C.I.E.) by Viceroy Lord Hardings. This honour by the British underlined their confidence in Shahu despite a mud slinging campaign unleashed by his detractors who had connived to dethrone him. Shahu shares his joy and elation with a close friend like Vichare.

Coronation Darbar
Kolhapur Camp
Delhi

To
Rajeshri Vicharesaheb
Many blessings

Today I received the title of GCIE. Many honours have come my way but this one should be considered significant by "our friends" who worked against me and did almost to land me in jail. They could not do it but managed to indulge in mud slinging to tarnish my image. I am an orphan but the Almighty protected me and removed the taint that was smeared on me. We should pray to God, King Edward VII and George V because they meted out justice to me and removed the stigma that was attached.I am ever grateful to the Almighty for this.

"Our friends" are still not satisfied with the ordeal I have undergone and are still campaigning against me calling me a "fraud" and a "hypocrite".

I beseech you not to part ways with me and be not my employee but a friend.

Shahu Chhatrapati
(Signature in *modi*)
(Vichare collection)

(5)

Bhaskarrao Jadhav on Satyashodhak Samaj

The Kolhapur Satyashodhak Samaj was founded in January 1911 with Bhaskarrao Jadhav as its president. Satyashodhak conferences were held in Pune and Nashik within a year. The turmoil caused by the Vedokta episode had recently waned. Present article was written by Jadhav on this background with a view to exploring the original ideals of Mahatma Phule.

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The article was first published in a booklet which is not available now and hence it is a rare historic document. Mahatma Phule had given a quotation of English Historian Henry Mead in the opening pages of his book "Gulamgiri." Mr. Jadhav gives the same quotation at the beginning of his article.

The Satya Samaj

By

B. V. Jadhav, M.A., LL.B.

"Many ages have elapsed since peculiar resources were afforded to the Brahmins; but the most considerate cosmopolite would hesitate to enrol them amongst the benefactors of the world. They boast of vast stores of ancient learning. They have amassed great riches, and have been invested with unbounded power, but to what good end ? They have cherished the most degrading superstitions and practiced the most shameless impostures. They have arrogated to themselves the possession and enjoyment of the rarest gifts of fortune and perpetuated the most revolting system known to the world. It is only from a diminution of their abused power that we can hope to accomplish the great work of national regeneration."

Thus does Mead sum up admirably the self-aggrandising policy of the Brahmans, under which they have enslaved the minds and to a great extent, the bodies of the mass of India and he has fearlessly suggested a remedy to accomplish the regeneration of India as a nation. According to him the spell of the supernatural power of the Brahman must be broken and he must himself come down, or be brought down from his high position.

To this conclusion another great man, Jotirav Fooley, was also driven. Born in Poona in 1827 of illiterate Shudra parents and looked upon as unworthy to acquire knowledge, he could enjoy only a few years' regular education in a School and had to rely upon himself to acquire knowledge. The deplorable condition of the masses early drew his attention and at great personal sacrifice he withstood the temptation of entering Government service and devoted himself to the public cause. It was he who took the most prominent part in starting female education and the education of the depressed classes and he took active steps to help the unfortunate widows of the Hindu Society. His greatest work was the establishment of the "Satya Shodhak Samaj."

The Samaj was first founded in 1873 with the object of emancipating the non-Brahman communities from the state of intellectual and religious bondage to which they were reduced by the craft of the Brahman priests. Jotirav had prepared the minds of his would-be followers by publishing small books in Marathi, exposing the tricks and lies of the priesthood. The most important of them was the "Gulamgiri" (slavry).

The "Gulamgiri" examines the story of the first six incarnations of God as given in the later Purans and exposes to strong ridicule the Brahmanic dogma of the birth of the first three of these from lower animals and that of the fourth from a wooden column. After proving the hollowness of the Brahmanic theory, Jotirav describes how the wily priest was forced to invent this foolishly absurd story in order to white wash and thus cover the atrocities and treacheries of the generals who led in succession the Aryan hosts to the conquest of Hindustan and whose names or rather nicknames are preserved

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in the names of the incarnations. Jotirav has wonderfully succeeded in explaining the prevalence of some of the peculiar customs even now found among the masses of the Maharashtra, which the Brahmans with all their big Purans are unable to account for.

With the same vigorous pen he proceeds to expose the doings of the present day Brahmans : how they form cliques, and tyrannise over others, how they deceive the British officers and how they rule high-handedly (dominantly) in Municipalities and Local Boards, how they look to the interests of Brahmans alone and are deaf to the grievances of the non-Brahman communities, all this is clearly explained. In strong words he condemms the present administration of education in which the teachers are recruited almost exclusively from the Brahman community. To teach non-Brahmans amounts to sacrilege in their eyes and they fully know that it will bring ruin on their hitherto jealously preserved privileges. They therefore try their best to dissuade and discourage non-Brahmans from learning, and their efforts are not unsuccessful. This is evident from the fact that the educational status of the non-Brahman masses has not much improved under the benign British rule extending over nearly a century, although the Government are sincerely making efforts to spread education among all classes of their subjects. Jotirav's object in writing *Gulamgiri* was not only to tell the Shudras how they had been duped by the Brahmans, but also to open the eyes of Government to that pernicious system of high-class education which has been persistently followed and which has been condemmed by English statesmen like Sir George Campbell and others as highly mischievous and pernicious to the interests of the Government.

Smarting under the partial loss of prestige and power, which the Brahmans have to suffer under the British rule, many of these teachers try to inflame against the Government the minds of the raw youths under their care. Jotirav had not to draw upon his imagination on this point, as he had his own painful experience to base his conclusions upon. The Brahman schoolmaster had succeeded in instilling his poison of hatred towards the British in the young and ardent mind of Jotirav, who therefore began to take lessons in shooting and sword exercises to the detriment of his literary education, with the object of preparing himself to take part in the liberation of his motherland from the foreign yoke (Gulamgiri, Chapter 14). By his contact with the Missionaries he soon saw through these Brahman tricks and discarded their pernicious ideas; and in 1873 he struck a warning note to his countrymen and the rulers. Unfortunately Government took no heed of it, and continued blindly to tread in the old paths and the educational department remained wholly in Brahman hands. The deplorable state of affairs described by Sir (then Mr.) Valentine Chirol was the sad consequence.

Jotirav felt sure of the coming danger and was very anxious to save his poor brethren from falling into the snares of the Brahmans. He therefore started the "Satyashodhak Samaj" immediately after the publication of his *Gulamgiri* and proceeded to create a body of non-Brahmans who would entertain a strong distrust about the intentions and ambitions of the Brahmans and remain staunch supporters and loyal subjects of the British Raj under whom only their emancipation was possible.

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The Samaj held its weekly meetings and carried on its work of propaganda. The chief doctrine was that there was no necessity for an intermediary between God and man. Everyone, according to the Samaj, was as competent to worship or offer his prayers to God in his own way as any other man. This theory of the equality of man and the doing away with the services of the tyrant priest attracted a large following, and marriages and other ceremonies began to be celebrated without the help of the Brahman Upadhyaya. The Brahmans saw in this a deathblow to their supremacy, both in religious and secular matters. For, the Satyashodhaks not only denied their authority in religious affairs by pronouncing all references in sacred books to the greatness of the Brahmans as interpolations, but also did away with superstition and took up in earnest the work of spreading education among the hitherto-slaves of the priests.

This exasperated the Brahmans, priests and laymen, who tried their best to put down this protestant movement, and did even stoop to use questionable methods. The machinery of the Civil, Criminal and Revenue Courts was set in motion against the leaders and followers of this movement and many a Brahman judge was found to decide in favour of, and try to uphold the unjust privileges of his castemen. But the High Courts of Bombay, Amraoti and Nagpur reversed many of these decisions in appeal and laid down important principles in favour of the Satysholdhaks.

The untimely death of Jotirav and of many of his staunch followers arrested the progress of this movement and even some ground was lost. But it never died out, and held its own in many scattered places. For want of a common line of action and co-operation and a strong central body to direct the movement, the scattered adherents could not do much. The desirability of holding a conference was therefore felt and it met at Poona for the first time on the 17th of April 1911, under the presidency of the late Ramayya Vyankayya Ayyavaru, a well known building-contractor of Bombay. This conference gave a unifying force to all the scattered constituents, elected a central body to direct the movement and adopted a constitution which clearly defined the principles of the Samaj. The principal resolutions adopted at the conference were :

"2nd - (a) All men are the children of one God, who is thus their Parent.

(b) As there is no necessity of an intermediary to approach the mother or to please the father, there is no need of an intermediary (or broker) such as a priest or a preceptor to enable the devotee to offer his prayers to God.

(c) Any one accepting this principle, is qualified to be a member of the Satya Samaj.

3rd - Every Satya Samajiyan must solemly subscribe to the following :-

"All human beings are the children of one God. They are, therefore my brothers (and sisters), and I shall always try to act on this principle. I shall not (require) the services of an intermediary at the time of performing a religious ceremony, and I shall always try to persuade others to follow the same practice. I shall not fail to educate my sons and daughters. I shall always be loyal to the Government. I make this declaration in the presence of God, the Omniscient and the Truth. May He help me to make proper use of my life by enabling me to observe this holy vow."

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5th - The chief object of this Conference is to increase amity and unity among the members of the Satya Samaj at various places and try to strengthen the work undertaken by it.

7th - Every member ought to perform his religious ceremonies himself. If there be any difficulty in his way, he may call in the aid of any other member of the Satya Samaj. But such helper shall not receive any remuneration for his services in any shape e.g. money dress, rations etc.

10th - This Conference strongly condemns the present seditious movement as well as the perpetration of outrages ; and it further earnestly requests all its members to keep themselves totally aloof from such movements."

The work of the Samaj was thus started with vigour; and religious ceremonies without the aid of any Brahman priests began to be celebrated in various places. The loss of the fees and the dimunition of prestige was very severely felt in several places and no less than 7 suits for damages were instituted in the Sub-Judge's Court at Khed (Poona District). One of these that is now before the Court, is for the infringement of the right of the village priest to officiate and receive fees at the funeral rites at the house of a Kunbi, who, as a member of the Samaj, performed the rites himself with the help of some brother members and without paying any fees to anybody. The Brahmans claim that, on all occasions, joyful or sorrowful, they are to be paid their fees or, in default the ascendants and descendants of the Yajman will for ever be doomed to hell. But when they found that even the ignorant Kunbi had been convinced of the hollowness of this threat, they had to go to law to overawe their hitherto slaves.

The second Conference met at Nasik on the 5th April 1912 under the Presidency of Dr. Santaji Ramji Lad of Thana, a pensioner of the Government Medical Department. In his address he had to deal with the new danger which threatened the Samaj and to discuss the circumstances under which his brother Samajists would be safe even in the Bombay Presidency. In every part of India excluding Bombay, the right of any Hindu to employ anybody as a priest is fully recognised and the village or family priest cannot sue his late client for ceasing to employ him. This equitable principle is not accepted by the High Court of Bombay which has held that it is the right of the village priest to officiate and to receive his customary fees and if that right be infringed, a suit for damages would lie. Dr. Lad discussed some of these decisions and showed that, if the members of the Satya Samaj scrupulously observed resolution 7 of the first Conference, the village priest would have no cause of action against them even in the Bombay Presidency.

The principal resolutions passed at the second Conference were for offering grateful and loyal congratulations to their Imperial Majesties for coming to India and strengthening the loyalty and giving a serious check to the seditious movement, and again bringing to the notice of the members of the Samaj the first 12 resolutions passed at Poona.

The movement is now spreading in all the districts. The work is very great, but the workers are few. The non-Brahmans are joining it with enthusiasm. Belgaum, Ahmednagar, Thana, Poona, Sholapur and Khandesh are awakening. The Chikodi Taluka of the Belgaum District is very active and the Marathas and others are every year

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discarding in larger numbers the mediations of Brahman Priests. A branch of the Chikodi Samaj was opened at Kolhapur and here too the number of adherents is fast rising. The potter and weaver communities have been, for some years, trying to throw off the Brahman's yoke and a number of civil suits were instituted and won by the Brahman priests in the Ichalkarnji Courts, but now they have gone to the High Court of His Highness the Maharaja Saheb of Kolhapur in special appeal. At Tirpan, a village in the Panhala Taluka, the Marathas and others have carried on pluckily an unequal war with the Priest and Kulkarni, who naturally receive the sympathies of Brahman Officers. The soil is ready and clamouring for the seed which, if judiciously and vigorously sown, would not fail to bear abundant crops. The Satyashodhak Samaj, which tries to expose the priest craft, is sure to put its followers on their guard against blindly trusting the Brahman Community in their avowed aims and ambitions in matters political, and thus lead to the strengthening of the loyalty of the masses to the British Throne. A vast majority of the Deccani politicians attached to the so-called National Congress, are Brahmans and many of them wish to see the Brahman supremacy re-established. A large part of their discontent is due to the sense of the loss of prestige caused to their community by the advent of the British Raj. Education is slowly but surely spreading and the non-Brahman communities have begun to assert themselves. This has exasperated the bigoted Brahmans who have come to hate the British rule as the prime cause of their impending downfall. This disaffection culminated in the recent extremist propaganda.

Great English observers like Mead, and Indians like Jotirav, have described how the village chavdi is utilised for the dissemination of disaffection towards Government and how important it is for the Government and all those who think that the continuance of British rule is essential for the well-being of the country, to guard the ignorant masses from the unhealthy influences of the priest-Kulkarni. And with this object the Samaj was first started and its work has been continued. This work is very necessary both for the rulers and the ruled and every rightminded person ought to hold forth his helping hand to this movement which is destined to achieve a great deal in the regeneration of the nation. "The Shudras are the life and sinews of the country, and it is to them alone, and not to the Brahmans, that the Government must ever look to help them in their difficulties, financial as well as political. If the hearts and minds of the Shudras are made happy and contented, the British Government need have no misgiving about their loyalty in the future."

To sum up, the Satya Samaj is a body of loyal subjects of His Imperial Majesty, who have come to realise that it is necessary for their regeneration to raise a protest against the slavery imposed upon them in religious matters. The hereditary priests and their castemen are determined to do everything in their power, good or bad, to perpetuate the bondage. The members of the Satya Samaj are poor in every respect; poor in wealth, poor in education and also poor in influence, as they are mostly hewers of wood and drawers of water. Their opponents, on the contrary, are endowed with everything calculated to achieve success in this world: they have riches, they are better educated; and the unhealthy influence of their community is felt everywhere from the village chavdi to the Imperial Council.

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The Satya Samaj therefore appeals to the generosity and philanthropy of all nobleminded people who ardently desire to remove oppression and to see justice done, and pray them to give the Samaj a helping hand in this their just cause and uphill work. Their urgent need is money to defend the various suits that are instituted or will here after be instituted, and money is also required to found a press to publish news papers pleading for the righteous cause and for the publication of books and tracts. The smallest amounts will be gratefully acknowledged.

(Dasram papers)

(6)

Shahu's letter to Jadhav

January 31, 1914

The letter written by Shahu in his own handwriting is addressed to Mr. Jadhav, Director of Miraj Mission School

---

Kolhapur
Tuesday
31-1-1914

My dear Mr. Jadhav,

I shall be really very very much pleased to accept the invitation of the mission students.

I feel really proud that they should consider me one of them.

I shall never forget this honour done to me. I value it most

I hope neither beef nor flesh of pig in tin or otherwise is served to me and Balasaheb. I shall bring my attendant Dattoo also with me.

Yours Sincerely,

Shahu Chhatrapati

(Vijay Survade collection)

(7)

Shahu Mill: Responsibility of Raghupati Pandit Maharaj

August 14, 1915

Raghupati Pandit Maharaj was the close confidant of Shahu Maharaja. It was typical of Shahu to entrust major responsibilities of works of public interest on trusted friends and get things done from them

---

Station Bunglow
14/8/1915

To

Revered Shri Rajguru Pandit Maharaj,

I have entrusted the responsibility of the mill on you just as I have done the same to Bapusaheb with responsibility of the Tank (Radhanagari Dam). Consider this your own personal work and strive to accomplish it as Bapusaheb is doing. You may consult Raobahadur Diwansaheb for this purpose. With respect.

Shahu Chhatrapati
(Signature in Modi)

(Guru Maharaj collection)

(8)

Shahu's Maratha - Dhangar (intercaste) Marriage scheme

May18, 1918

Shahu was of strong conviction that encouraging more intercaste marriages, was the most effective way of annihilation of caste. Being an activist reformer, Shahu had planned a hundred intercaste marriages of among Marathas and Dhangars (Shephards) in the princely states of Kolhapur and Indore in one

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grand ceremony. He had deputed his official priest Gundopant Pishwikar to Indore to assess the situation there. In the following letter, Pishwikar gives a detailed account of Vedokta and consent of the Indore Court, for such intercaste marriages, to the Maharaja.

|| Shree ||

Indore
May 18, 1918

In the service of Shrimanmaharaj Chhatrapati Saheb Karveer Swami,

Many humble salutations and regards of Gundo Sakharam Pishwikar....

My letter sent day before yesterday, must have reached the hands of wthe Huzur.

As per Maharaja's order given to me, I talked to General Matkar Saheb and Nayab Dewan Wagle Saheb. They had called upon one Vedic Pandit Bhayyashastri Dravid. I talked to him regarding *Vedokta*. He did not disagree with me, but assured me to conform his opinion after giving a thought. Yesterday again, we three - myself, General Matkar, Dewan Wagle had assembled together. They showed me the Vansha-vriksha (family tree) of Holkar dynasty. This was prepared by Srimant Tukojirao Maharaja, grand father of the present Maharaja. From the family tree, it is absolutely clear that Holkar family is from the Rathod Kshatriyas. Information in the family tree as such is complete and also it is meticulously prepared. Also it shows an evidence about obtaining the golden bracelets from Ranaji of Udeypur for Srimant Tukojirao, Shri. Shivajirao and Shri. Yeshwantrao, alongwith royal decrees(Khalitas). As per the tradition, golden bracelets cannot be worn by anybody except Kshatriyas and even the Shastras say the same fact. I was informed that a attempts were made in Shrimant Tukojirao's time itself, to establish the Kshatriya identity of the Holkar clan. Further research, to find more evidence is continued. As for the Vedic consent, a list has been given to Rajopadhyes (official priests) and Shastris (Pandits) and a reply is expected, within next 4-5 days.

Your Highness has ordered me through Mamasheb Talcherkar that I should not leave without completing the assigned task. Mamasaheb infact advised me very properly and informed me rightly on various issues. His loyalty to Chhatrapati is undisputable and he is one of the good sympathizers of the Kolhapur Court.

As for the marriages proper, here the Dhangar commumity assembled, and majority subscribed to Maharaja's opinion. A signature campaign has been initiated and already 100-150 signatures are collected. Unfortunately, no immediate action seems possible as the month of Vaishakh prohibits possibility of any marriages.

I don't see any obstacles in initiating *Vedokta* rites here. The credit goes to the Karveer *Vedokta* episode whose reverberations are still heard. All Maratha Kshatriyas can now easily enjoy the fruits of the immense trouble and pains born by your Highnes for this purpose. The *Vedokta dharma*, once lost in the sands of time, is now opened by Your Highness grace with ample references and resources. This, indeed is the true duty of the one born of Kshatriya clan. The resources include - consent of Jagadguru (Shankaracharya), consent of the Kolhapur Brahmins as well as the Marathas so on and so forth... Thus this

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task has been made easy by the Chhatrapati by his relentless efforts of the last eight to ten years. Although there are some mischievous people who oppose this, they cannot put any obstacles in the way. The entire credit of guarding the Kshatriyahood and its interests solely goes to the Chhatrapati....

People here are of the opinion that talks about the *Vedokta* examining the roots of families of would be brides and grooms on both sides, procedure of exchanging honours, *kumkum* and gifts during the wedding, etc. should be initiated right now to be completed till the month of Kartik so that in the later month on auspicious times weddings should be performed. The list of the families due for marraiges, along with details of their social status, incomes etc. is getting ready. The same will have to be prepared at our end. There is no dearth of brides and grooms here.

I will meet Maharaj Saheb again either tomorrow or day after.

Your obedient and humble servant,
Rajdharmadhikari
G.S.Pishvikar

(Kolhapur Archives, Shahu Daftar, Paper No. R. 7608)

(9)

Shahu's letter to Dr. Krishnabai Kelavkar.

8 Feb 1919

Krishnabai Kelavkar is the daughter of Rakhmabai Kelavkar, the first native lady education officer of the Kolhapur State. With inspiration from Shahu Maharaja, she studied at Grant Medical college of Bombay and pursued higher medical education in Europe, to join as a doctor in the government hospital of Kolhapur. It was quite an exception in the contemporary Maratha community to find a woman, with such high medical qualifications, a feat which the Maharaja greatly appreciated. He created a special ladies section in the hospital for Krishnabai and appointed her as its chief.

This letter has the context of many difficulties that Krishnabai seems to be facing in the hospital. It is an answer to her compalints in an understanding manner. The letter reflects Shahu's fatherly attitude and affectionate feelings about Krishnabai, an appreciation of her high education and faith in her working capacity. The letter also reveals that the Maharaja had started a special orphan's ward in the government hospital to be looked after by the court surgeon Dr. Tengshe and Queen Lakshmibai. Shahu had made this arrangement so that the queen is occupied and may bear the grief following the sudden demise of her son Prince Shivaji. In this regard, he says in the letter, "As regards orphans, after the sad bereavement in my family it is the only thing that interests my wife."

Kolhapur,
8th February, 1919

My Dear Dr. Miss Kelavkar,

Your services are needed to the Darbar. The Darbar will be very sorry to lose you. The Darbar never wishes that you should leave the services. The Darbar is well aware of your qualifications. The Lady Dr. must understand that she is a Lady Doctor and not a veterinary surgeon and she cannot expect human beings to be forced like animals to a certain doctor alone. They are human beings. They go where they think best. Medico legal cases may be sent to you if you like. Please let me know your wishes in the matter. But you will have to go to court very often. If you are going to leave the work

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to your assistants who are males then the present arrangement seems to be more convenient and less expensive. If your assistants are ready to take up all the cases, the whole medico legal department will be given in your charge to the great delight of Dr. Tengshe who is over-worked. In the British Districts I have never observed a lady doctor thus in charge of the whole hospital. It was not so even at Indore when Dr. Tambe was there. From this you will see how the Darbar has complete faith in you.

As to nurses the number in your control is not reduced and you need not be sorry if more nurses are given to Dr. Tengshe. So if one more assistant doctor is given to you Dr. Tengshe need not be sorry.

As regards orphans, after the sad bereavement in my family, it is the only thing that interests my wife and Dr. Tengshe is regarded by my wife as a father and that is why orphans are intended to be handed over to my wife and Dr. Tengshe and I think this is a good turn of kindness I am doing to my wife in handing over the orphans to her. Women's nature being very sharp even two women cannot pull on together though they be sisters. That is the proverb of old. Therefore I thought that the fatherly relation of Dr. Tengshe with my wife would carry on the orphanage more smoothly and would be more pleasing to my wife.

If any nurses have been taken away from you please let me know. Also please let me know the number of nurses there were at the time of Dr. Sinclare and Dr. Sain and also the number of indoor and outdoor cases you have got.

Yours sincerely,
sd/ - Shahu Chhatrapati

(Dr.Pralhad Kelavkar collection)

(10)

Shahu's assistance to *Sandesh*

January 31, 1920

Shahu encouraged, inspired and helped setting up of many newspapers echoing the voice of the bahujan samaj. He was also generous and open-minded enough to render help to Brahmin owned liberal newspapers like Sudharak and Sandesh, who upheld the cause of true social justice. The following letter is about offering financial assistance to Sandesh. This assistance was given by Shahu on his own without waiting for Mr. Kolhatkar's (its editor) request. Shahu never expected this loan to be repayed. Later when Sandesh started criticizing Kolhapur Darbar, Shahu asked his officer to tear off the promissory note mentioning that loan lest he should be tempted to ask for a payback in revenge.

Confidential — Kolhapur
31-1-20

To

Respected Ramachandra Ananaji Prabhawalkar,

Please contact Mr. Kolhatkar, the Editor of *Sandesh*. I wish to give him a loan of Rs.4000/-. Kindly arrange the same, through the lawyer so that after finishing this formality I can ask Rao Bahadur Dewan Seheb Sabnis, to arrange for the said amount.

Regards.

Shahu Chhatrapati
(Signature in modi)

(Kolhapur Archives, Shahu Daftar, Paper No. R 11351)

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(11)

Report of Mangaon Conference published in *Mooknayak*

April 10, 1920

The first conference of the 'untouchables' in Kolhapur State was convened on March 21 and 22, 1920, under the presidency of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Here is the report given by Babasaheb himself, in his chronicle, the Mooknayak. Shahu himself attended the conference as the chief guest. It was from this platform that Shahu openly and without any reservations proclaimed Dr. Ambedkar as the real leader of the Dalits (untouchables) and described him as the future national leader of emerging India. In fact, this conference laid the foundation stone of Maharashtra's future social history. The following report thus is an important documentation of modern Maharashtra's history.

At the end of the report Dr. Babasaheb, has printed a letter, from a volunteer named Rendale. The letter describes, how the uppercast people boycotted the participating untouchables and Appasaheb Dadgauda Patil, the convenor of this conference. This news reached Shahu Maharaja who immediately called the relevant native villagers, and warned them of punishment. This warning served the purpose.

Conference of the Ostracised from South Maharashtra

The first meeting of the Conference was held at **Post Mangaon** in the **Kagal Jahagir on March 21/22, 1920.**

Despite the first day being the auspicious *Padwa*, crowds exceeding five thousand had gathered to attend the meeting. It could have been much more; but the Kulkarnis, Talathis etc. in the nearby villages purposely spread the rumour that the meeting was of the 'converted' people, and the president is also a 'converted' one. They spread the word that it was sinful to attend the meeting and thus had vitiated the minds of the people. However, the meeting was attended by senior officials of the Kolhapur Court and well wishers there in. Some Brahmins were also present. However, it should be noted that none of the Depressed Class Mission or institutions otherwise working for betterment of the Ostoacised community had sent their representative.

First Day

The working of the Conference started at 5.00 p.m. on 21st. Dadasaheb Rajesaheb Inamdar, Chief of the Reception Committee, spoke first. In his speech, he thanked the delegates for attending the event in such a remote village that too by keeping aside all possible obstacles like festivities, domestic difficulties etc. He also spoke about the prevailing circumstances and explained the necessity of calling such a conference. In conclusion, he categorically said that rather than depending on others to improve one's social standing, these days it was vital to make these efforts on one's own.Thereafter, after it was proposed and seconded as per the protocol, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar took the chair amidst a wide applause.

The President in his remarks discussed the unique nature of this Conference from many angles. He said that this was the first time such a conference was being held in the province and remarked that the commitment observed by the people was unparalleled. The revolutionary thinking emnating from the ostracised communities is unprecedented.. He said so far the untouchables always blamed their ill-fate for their disgraceful conditions and

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believed that since it was something not in their hands, they have to pull through the sad times. However, he added, the recent generation hardly thought so and held the wrongful deeds of others responsible for their condition.

After discussing the uniqueness of the event, the President analysed the present status of ostracized community. He said the religion of Hinduism to which they belong, organised human beings in very close compartments, as per two doctrines. One, social status good or bad by birth and second, sanctity or non-sanctity related to birth. Again, Hindus are further divided, as per these doctrines as 1) the most superior by birth and the most sanctified class - the Brahmins 2) Non-Brahmins, one step down in social status and sanctity from the Brahmins) 3) The most downtrodden, most inferior, with no sanctity and dignity at all - that is the ostracised community.

By describing the classification and the uneven divisions mentioned above, the President aptly described the consequences on the three classes of these classifications and divisions. He pointed out how even a worthless Brahmin is at an advantage just by being superior by birth and sanctity owing to the birth related system. Non-Brahmins are condemned as inferior and incapable. They remained backward because they were not allowed to learn. Even so, the non-Brahmins still have an access to gain both knowledge and wealth. They do not have these attributes today, but they are bound to get them tomorrow. However, the most miserable condition today is of the untouchables. By birth, they are condemned to be regarded as incapable and impure. Having considered themselves thus incapable and impure for a long time, the ostracized have had lost all sense of self-esteem and self-respect, virtues necessary for progress. Socially, they enjoy no rights like other Hindus. They cannot go to schools. They cannot fetch water from public wells; they cannot even walk normally on roads. Neither can they use a vehicular facility. They are shunned off even from these minor rightful facilities. Equal damage is seen on the economic front. Three prime ways to gain wealth, viz. trade, services, and agriculture were not accessible to them. They don't get customers in trade owing to the untouchable status (vital); so trade is impossible. The same touch sensitivity and apartheid prohibits them from getting into jobs. The President described how this touch taboo was responsible for ousting them from even the military. The same tragedy is seen in agriculture as well.

So, how can this community, so downtrodden, ostracised, neglected and exploited, make progress? The President had some possible answers. **Natural qualities and favourable circumstances are two drives that led to ultimate progress. All will agree that there was no derth of natural qualities amongst the Ostracised. However, their growth is stunted because the circumstances are not favourable. There have been many suggestions for turning the circumstances favourable to the untouchables. But the President was of firm opinion that the ostracised community should create and increase its political strength. This could be achieved only by having Communal Representation in the law-making bodies. Finally he said that the slogan "Satyameva Jayate" (May the truth prevail) will remain hollow so long as the untouchables did not organise and gain political strength.** Thereafter, the Regulation Committee, was nominated and the proceeding of the first day concluded.

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Second Day

The Conference started at 3.00 p.m. The Maharaja of Kolhapur obliged one and all of the ostracised community by gracing the function with his presence. Initially, children sang praises of the Almighty and of the Maharaja.

Thereafter, Maharaja of Kolhapur delivered his address.(His speech is given elsewhere in this volume). Following resolutions were passed in the meeting

1) The Conference expresses explicit and unsolicited joy for the victory of the British government and the Allies in the world war.

2) **Shri Shahu Maharaja Chhatrapati of Karveer, has taken up the noble cause of emancipation of the ostracised by offering to them all equal rights in his State. Hence, the Conference is of the opinion that every person of this community should observe his birthday as a pious festival.**

3) The Conference whole-heartedly thanks all the (other) Princes who are putting best of their efforts for progress of the ostracised community.

4) For the progress of any individual, favourable social circumstances are a necessary requirement. The very fact of birth makes the ostracised as impure and hence ineligible for any progress. Not only this, this community is deprived of the minimum human rights again owing to the stigma of birth. Since the ostracised are also a part of Indian Empire, they should have the following human rights like all other Indian people.

a) Public roads, wells, reservoirs, schools, sanatoriums, and places of entertainments under licence, restaurants, vehicles, etc. are public facilities and the ostracised community shall have full right to enjoy them.

b) By qualitative virtues, they also have a right to enter trade and get employments. The Conference opines that whenever they face difficulties in enjoying these rights, the Government should be obliged to remove these difficulties by law.

5) Primary education, without differentiation by gender, should be made compulsory and free as early as possible.

6) It is highly necessary to spread education (and its benefits) amongst the ostracised community. Their progress otherwise is not possible. To achieve this goal, the school teachers, deputy assistants, deputy educational inspectors etc. must be willing to spread education. As the privileged class neglects education of this community, the Conference strongly requests the Government to facilitate entry of the ostracised community into these cadres, by making appropriate arrangment of training for them. To spread education amongst these classes, the Conference is of the opinion that in each district at least one deputy or assistant deputy educational inspector be selected from the ostracised community and for this a person who has passed the third year examination of training college or matriculation should be primarily considered to be eligible.

7) The Conference requests the Government to offer scholarships in education to the ostracised community students in the manner the Muslims, the non-Brahmins and the ostracised are offered scholarships in some principalities and States like Mysore.

8) The Conference opines that there should be common schools for touchables and untouchables without discrimination.

9) The conditions of the Mahar

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watandars today are miserable. There are two reasons for this.

a. The watan has lost its prestige because Mahars are obliged to do the dirty work of village such as carrying dead animals.

b. The watan land is divided in each generation and today is so fractionated that the small pieces they hold cannot sustain them.

The Conference feels a radical change in the system is necessary. Instead of allowing Mahars to possess very small unsustainable pieces, bulk of Mahar watan lands shall be distributed among senior Mahars so that each gets substantial piece of land for sustenance. Those who lose the land in this way shall be allotted vacant pieces of land as fare compensation.

10) The Conference recommends that consumption of caracass as food by any community (meal of dead animals) should be regarded as an offense by law

11) The Conference demands that people from ostracised community should be appointed as *Talathis*.

12) Although the Conference is grateful for efforts made by upper caste communities and individuals for improvement of the donwtrodden, the Conference requests the Government not to assume the remedies or measures suggested by them towards this goal as acceptable to the ostracised community.

13) The Conference demands that the ostracised should be able to send their representatives in proportion to their population to the legislative councils by electing them through separate electorates.

14) The Conference solemnly thanks all the volunteers who made this Conference a success, in particular Mr. Appa Dadgauda Patil.

15) The Conference confers on the President the rights to send above resolutions to relevant officials and other concerned individuals.

Effect of the Conference

(A letter to *Mooknayak*)

To

The Editor, *Mooknayak*

It is true that the conference on 21 and 22 March held at Mangaon proved largely beneficial to the untouchable communities. However, the same has attracted wrath of the privileged people and caused trouble at their hands to the Mahar community. They have prohibited Mahar's entry into the villages, purchase of goods from shops, collection of fuel wood and timber from adjoing wilderness, and fetching water from the common well. They mockingly taunt that the Maharaja of Karveer will give all these things to you and keep you happy. Now the untrouchables are forced to shop in the neighbouring village (instead of their own) and water has to be fetched from a river 2 miles away. There of course is a well owned by Mahars in the village; however, due to summer it has run dry and overall condition of the Mahar community is pathetic. To get relieved, it is understood that these people, have submitted their petition at the Kagal court. So, it is humbly requested that the petition should be attended to, as early as possible. While doing so, it is necessary to remember that the untouchables are as human as anybody. While they have freed themselves from one kind of salvery, the other one is being imposed on them. Quite a misfortune! After the Conference, people carried their dead animals just like the Mahars. It is evident from this that the local folk have conspired against the Mahar community.

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Our great Maharaja, I am sure, will deal sternly with the situation. If not him, who will?

Yours,
Aidaale

(Mooknayak, April 10, 1920)

(12)

Mahars freed from slavery of watans

May 14, 1920

The Mahar community was stagnated in the slavery of their watan. The community was attached to and not able to forego the tiny pieces of watan lands. Shahu proposed a solution: consolidate (on records) all Mahar lands of all the villages in Kasba Karveer; and to re-allocate these to a few families in such measure that the families could earn adequate livelihood. These Mahars will remain in the government service. The remaining families were to be freed of the watans so that they shall be free to earn their livelihood any which way they want, the freedom which was denied to them so far. After the entire Mahar community at Kasba Karveer approved of this idea, Shahu appointed 16 select Mahar individuals, as government servants. They were to serve in the offices of Shahu himself, Aaisaheb Maharaj, the Prince, and if required even at the temple of Mahalakshmi as well.

This was a prototype, an experiment Shahu performed before he abolished the entire Mahar Watan in the state. The order is given below.

(Seal of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja)

On the day of *Vaisakh Bahul Dashmi, Thursday of Swastishri Rajyabhishek Shaka 247, (May 14, 1920)* during Raudranaam Samvatsar the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja orders Sadu Tukaram Bange as follows:

Ever since the beginning of village culture, the Mahar community has been loyally in the service of people and the government. However, till today nobody showed them the real path of progress. It is seen, that they are and were always treated inhumanly like slaves. They are humans. In these modern times it is a fundamental and sacred duty to absolve them from this burden of slavery and to educate them so that they become cultured and attain a honourable status in the society. This also concurs with the doctrine that humans should treat other fellow humans in the most humane way. Realizing this, the Maharaja has given a thought for all the lands of Mahars at Kasba Karveer with a total revenue size of one hundred and twenty nine acres and eight gunthas with the cess of total Rs. Four hundred and Ninety seven. Presently, these lands collectively bear document no. 9, a consolidated name of 'all the Mahars'. With due consent of the Mahar community it is hereby now cancelled. In lieu of which, following 16 individuals, have been absorbed in the Government services. Their names are as follows.

1) Baburao R. Kamble
2) Krishnarao Parashram Kamble
3) Nagoji Tipaji Kamble
4) Ranu Shankar Koley
5) Sadu Tukaram Bange
6) Jyoti Nayku Bange
7) Limbari Shantu Ligade
8) Jyoti Subhana Ligude
9) Balaji Cholaji Kale
10) Nanu Ranoji Kale
11) Masu Manaji Kale

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12) Masu Laxman Kale
13) Aba Jaku Sarnaik
14) Sadu Ranoji Sarnaik
15) Bhau Tulsa Kalekar
16) Tulsappa Santram Sarnaik.

Since you are from one of them, you have been allotted out of the total Mahar lands, a piece of eight acres, 3 gunthas, as the inherited rightful land. As these 16 people will be responsible to serve in the government, you and your heirs etc will responsibly serve to the Chhatrapati with fullest of loyalties and obedience.

For your gifted land, the same rules will apply which are in force for the *sanadi shiledars, kotkari* etc.

These 16 individuals are to serve as the government servants. They will be in service of the Maharaja himself, Aaisaheb Maharaj, the Prince etc. If need be, they shall serve Sri Mahalaxmi Karveernivasini as well....

These sixteen people will be treated as per the rank of sanadi, shiledar and no one, including the *Gav-Kamgar Patil, Kulkarni, Chougule etc.* will delegate them any personal work.

Since these appointed persons, now will receive enough of salaries, a path to progress has been carved for them. Hence, the Maharaja feels confidant that they will educate their next generations and attain a better status. The Maharaja has brought the Mahars direatly in the government service. As a consequence, no Mahar will be required to do the bonded labour and filthy and unhygienic work they did previously owing to a pernicious tradition. The Maharaja is fully hopeful, that they will now rise above the situation and their real progress will start. Maharaja has been kind enough to offer you this opportunity hence you may now live peacefully, serving the royal family loyally and utilizing the opportunity given to you.

(Gangaram Kamble collection)

(13)

Special issue of *Mooknayak*: Ambedkar's letter

June 13, 1920

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1920 started the journal Mooknayak in order to raise an outcry against the atrocities on untouchable communities. Shahu generously patronized this endeavor. Even before this, these two leading personalities had developed a mutual respect and close rapport at Mangaon and Nagpur Conferences. Ambedkar had decided to publish a special issue of the journal on Maharaja's birthday (26 July 1920).

Mooknayak,
Parel, Mumbai
13-6-1920

To

Shrimanmaharaj Shahu Chhatrapati,
Karveer,

At your service.

As per the resolutions passed in the Mangaon and Nagpur Conferences, the day of 26 June is going to be celebrated all over as your birthday. It has been planned to publish a special issue of *Mooknayak* on this day. The issue will contain His Highness's photograph and the outline of your achievements during your regime. In fact, previously I had requested for such an update to be sent. However till date, I am sorry to say there was no reply from

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your side. As the days remaining are very few, I have decided to personally come and collect the required information. To this purpose this evening I am starting for Kolhapur to reach by Tuesday. Maharaja will be gracious enough to see me. With regards.

Yours sincerely
Bhimrao Ambedkar

(Mangaon Conference Special Issue)

(14)

Shahu requests Pease for Ambedkar

June 23, 1920

Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to England to pursue higher education in the month of July 1920. Along with academic advancement, he had planned to meet the leaders out there to create favorable opinion about the non-Brahmin movement and backward classes in India. With this view in mind, Shahu introduced him to a leader in England who was also Shahu's friend -Sir Alfred Pease.

CHHATRAPATI MAHARAJA OF KOLHAPUR

Jai Bhavani

Kolhapur
June23, 1920

My dear Sir Alfred Pease,

This is to introduce to you my friend Dr. Ambedkar who belongs to one of the untouchable communities namely the Mahars. He is a Ph. D. of the Columbia University, New York and has been a Professor at Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. He is coming to England for study at the London School of Economics and at the Inns of Court. He will explain to you the difference between the Backward Classes and Brahmin bureaucracy. Also he will tell you what suffering one, who tries to sympathise, has to undergo at the hands of the bureaucratic Brahmins who claim to have been a democratic people. The non-brahmins have failed to get a hearing from the several administrations in India, but they hope to find sympathy at the hands of the British public. May I therefore request you to give Dr. Ambedkar a patient hearing and such help as you can conveniently render ?

With apologies for troubling you, Believe me,

Yours Sincerely,
Sd/- Shahu Chhatrapati

(Vijay Surwade Collection)

(15)

Shahu to sue Lokmanya Letter to Ambedkar

July 8, 1920

The letter has some history. It was publicized that Tilak had described the Mahar community as a criminal tribe in 1920. Shahu had asked Dr. Ambedkar whether this would attract a civil/ criminal case against him. Ambedkar had opined that these attempts would not achieve much. (In fact, this time he was making preparations for England sojourn.) The reply shows Shahus strategic thinking. For him, it was important that Ambedkar be known in England as the representative of the oppressed classes fighting against the Brahminic hegemony.

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Kolhapur
3/8 July, 1920

My dear Dr. Ambedkar,

Thanks for your letter of the 28th ultimo. I think the prosecutions should be undertaken even if they are sustainable or not. It is no point if the prosecutions are sustainable or not. The point is that you should become known in England when everyone will enquire who started these famous prosecutions.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- Shahu Chhatrapati

(Kolhapur Archives, Shahu Daftar, paper R-12030)

(16)

Shahu's letter to Latthe

July 27, 1920

Satyashodhak leader Annasaheb Babaji Latthe had to flee from Kolhapur State in 1914, after being wrongly accused in the 'Tar smearing' episode. Shahu had not lost respect for him, though. Latthe too had continued his crusade for upliftment of the oppressed. Later, Shahu regretted that Latthe suffered unnecessarily in his own state. The Chhatrapati sent Latthe a letter of unconditional apology and sought his favour. A transperent king indeed with open mind !

CHHATRAPATI MAHARAJA OF KOLHAPUR

Jai Bhavani

Hubli
27th July, 1920

My dear Mr. Latthe

Having every hope of unreservedly forgiven, I request permission to apologize for the trouble you had in Kolhapur. I was led astray by Sovani, Karmarkar, Mhaiskar, Chiprikar Patil and Kallappa and others. But by your acts you have made me ashamed of myself and hence this unreserved apology. I shall feel obliged for kindly accepting it and your continuing to be a friend as before. This is an instance to be remembered how a Brahman makes even friends and relatives of a man fight with him. We will of course take more care after this to guard against the insinuations of our so called friends and avoid misunderstanding.

Who will take back to confess one's real mistake to you, when your noble and great thoughts, your vehement patriotism, your ever readiness to work for the cause of our country and above all your earnest desire to help the poor and the deserted are taken into consideration ?

Yours very sincerely,
Shahu Chhatrapati

(From Annasaheb Latthe: Jeevan va Karya by Shri Madvana)

(17)

Latthe's magnanimous reply to Shahu

July 28, 1920

Latthe's prompt reply shows his unwavering faith in the State of Kolhapur, his respect and gratitude for Shahu and a detached attitude of viewing the events of the past.

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Belgaum
28/7/1920

Submitted for the favours of Maharaja-

I must admit, I could hardly go through the generous words in your letter. So moved I was. In fact, I had already reached a decision to forget all the bitter and unfortunate events of 1914 and to reminisce only the pleasant days before it. You are after all a heir to Chhatrapati's dynasty. This is the bond which has balanced me in my movements of extreme anger and enticement.

Your feeling of affection in yesterday's letter overwhelms me. May be it (the apology)was not necessary; however I am profusely obliged to you for your total faith in me. Not that I am worthy of it. However, it makes me proud and happy that finally the Maharaja has acknowledged my loyalty.

In reply, I will only state that I should be everworthy for the love which you showered on me and that I shall use all my energies in the service of the Kolhapur *gadi*.

I should not make an attempt to portray that I had no differences with Maharaja as regards the unfortunate events of 1914 or that I did not have any differences with Maharaja at all. However, I wish to sincerely promise Maharaja that since all the human agonies and ecstasies are the result of unchangeable forces (of destiny), I have decided to abide by the eternal quality of "loyalty". The feeling of friendship involves equality. Although you are entrusting me with your friendship, I do not assume myself worthy of the honour. I request Maharaja to order for my services whenever required. I shall render the same at Maharaja's feet equally enthusiastically. I am writing this letter, without any hesitation in my mind.

Yours faithfully,
B. Latthe

(From Annasaheb Latthe Jeevan Va Karya)

(The original letter was in English. Shri. Madvana translated it in Marathi for his book. The original one could not be found in the Kolhapur Archives.)

(18)

Shahu's letter to 'Lokmanya' Ambedkar

Year 1920

Here is an important letter from Shahu to Ambedkar written after the Mangaon conference (March 1920) and before the latter's England tour (July 1920). The date is not mentioned. Here, while addressing him, Shahu bestows the title of "Lokmanya' on Dr. Ambedkar evern when Tilak was alive. It underscores Shahu's optimism that soon Dr. Ambedkar will rise to become the leader of not only untouchables but of the entire backward class of India. It reflects Shahu's trust in Ambedkar's qualities. Shahu indeed was a visionary.

To

'Lokmanya' Ambedkar,

I always thought of writing to you about the untouchable community. Today I am writing this letter. I sincerely hope that after reading it you will heartily help me.

Of late, the untouchable people have lost their spirit and particularly the Mahars have lost all their self-respect. It never occurs to them even remotely that they are human beings as all other humans. This thought had troubled me a lot. I think,

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the reason for this lassitude is total lack of education. No one is willing to educate them. Even if some philanthropist offers them a helping hand, they are not ready to grasp the same.

Once at Shirol I called all the Mahar brethren to me - even toured them in my car; strangely, they could not sense my affection at all. Instead, they kept on saying, "No, no! Please don't get closer!" As if I had committed some crime. And what is the reason for such behaviour? The cruel despotic bureaucracy of the Brahmins and the rules that it has laid down.

The documents of the Mahar watan invariably bear the noting that the watan land belong to all Mahar community (*Samasta Mahar*). It means 100-150 Mahars get only 10-20 acre of land for distribution amongst them. In other words each family get only 2 to 4 aaras of land which could hardly sustain their livelihood.

This situation however is not seen with the *watan* lands of Joshis or Kulkarnis. Just for a land of 5-6 Aaras, a whole Mahar family gets trapped. In addition, they have to serve the people at large in the name of *Balute*. Although they earn meagre amounts, the Kulkarnis and Patils make them slog heavily for it. Then, their friends, relatives, police officials and their friends, people in revenue, education departments, and lawyers - all extract heavy work from them in the name of *balute*. They are made to cut fuel wood, serve chappals, fabricate ropes for them etc.

These days some lawyers, astrologers of Kolhapur stay in Pune. Their estates are in villages(near Kolhapur). Mr. Advocate gets free labour in these places from the Mahars. In addition, the lawyers are free to exploit these miserable..... (Incomplete)

(Vijay Surwade collection)

(19)

Shahu's letter to Shridhar Tilak

July 30, 1920

Here is Shahu's letter during the last illness of Tilak, addressed to his son, Sridharpant Tilak. Shahu took great risk of incurring the wrath of the British while writing this letter openly. Deep down in his heart, Shahu always had great affection and respect for Tilak.

Chhatrapatri Maharaja
of Kolhapur
Jay Bhawani

Station Bunglow
Kolhapur
30-7-20

To

Mr. Sridharpant Tilak,

I felt very bad upon receiving the news about Lokmanya's ill health. I request you to keep me informed of his health daily by telegraph. In my opinion he should put himself up rather in a warm climate. He may as well stay in my bunglow at Miraj. I sincerely feel that after coming here, expert doctors like Vail and Wanless can certainly help him to improve on his health. I have sent Mr. Tophkhane, Mr. Vichare and Mr.Ponkshe to you.

Shahu Chhatrapati
(Signature in modi script)

(Jayantrao Tilak collection)

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(20)

Brahmin - non Brahmin conflict and Satyashodhak Jalasa. Shahu's letter to Mr. Adam

August 20, 1920

This letter addressed to Mr. Adam, a gazetted British officer of the Bombay province, bears marks where Shahu has made certain corrections. The non-Brahmin movement had reached its speak around this time and the Brahmin leadership and their newspapers had opened a vitriolic assault on Shahu. It was also the time when the council elections were declared and canvassing had reached a crescendo. The Satyashodhak musical programmes (Jalsas) had created a lot of uproar. Demise of Lokmanya Tilak was a recent event and the socio-political ethos of Maharashtra was in turmoil. This letter has to be viewed against this backdrop.

Camp Raibag,
20th August, 1920

My dear Mr. Adam,

I send you herewith a copy of a picture published by the 'Sandesh' of Bombay. The picture has deified Tilak as 'Shrikrishna' before whom India in the form of 'Arjuna' is shown to have been kneeling down in a most supplicant manner. Everybody knows that both 'Shrikrishna' and 'Arjuna' were Kshatriyas of the same caste to which the ancestors of the present day Kshatriyas, Marathas, belonged. The idea of a Kshatriya meekly bowing down before a Brahmin is naturally grossly insulting to the feelings of the Kshatriya Marathas. Nobody would object if the Brahmins raise their hero to the skies as much as they like, but they ought not certainly to do such pranks as will wound the feelings of the warrior community. But this picture is only a fresh instance of the Brahmin's wily attempts to impress upon the non-Brahmins the sense of perpetual social and religious bondage in which the Brahmins have been holding them from ancient times. Such pictures ought to be condemned. To deify and make Tilak Krishana-Tilak whom all loyalists and most of the moderates associate with heinous offences is degradation of Shri Krishna himself infinitely worse than that of Jesus Christ or Paigamber when his part is played on the stage in a dramatic performances. The excesses committed by the volunteers at the Tilak funeral processions in Bombay and Poona are but too well known. They forced not only non-Brahmin Hindus but it is said European soldiers and even ladies to take off their caps, turbans and hats as a mark of homage to Tilak. That was only to impress on the people that Tilak and not the British Govt. ruled India. They also broke three Nandis (Bull gods sacred to Lingayat community) and burnt some shops of non-Brahmins while they held their political Conference at Hubli. Thus now and again the Brahmins are losing no opportunity of stamping their social and Political superiority on the minds of the masses which irritate and outrage the feelings of the high class Kshatriya Marathas. The 'Lokasangraha' has stolen and mischievously given publicity to my private order regarding the worship of my family gods with the evident intention of making a row and ruining me. What the non-Brahmins feel is that Govt. are sitting silent over all these mischievous acts of the Brahmins calculated to irritate the non-Brahmins. I do not know if this is consistant with the policy of noninterference in social and religious matters or of holding the balance

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evenly between the different communities, laid down by the noble and great Queen Victoria. In my note which I gave to Mr. Montgomerie when I was recently at Poona to see His Excellency, I have given the circumstances in which I came to pass the order and I keep a copy of the note herewith. When I was in Poona I saw His Excellency but then I did not explain to His Excellency the circumstances of the attack made on my order by some Brahmin Chiefs and the Brahmin public.

The Chief of Miraj himself made two Jagadguru instead of one and his protege calls every Maratha including all Maratha Princes and Chiefs a Shudra i.e. an ill-born person without any dignity and reputation born to serve Brahmins. This surely hurts the feelings of all Marathas but neither the Marathas nor their Princes made any complaint to Govt. Kindly read the whole of the enclosed note which I handed over to Mr. Montgomerie during my interview. Because it is very foul and I want to bring to the notice of His Excellency that the Brahmins are agitating over what is after all a private order regarding worship of my household gods. It was neither published in the State Gazette nor intended to go beyond the religious section of my Khasgi Department. As the Brahmins are now thus defiantly mocking the feelings of the non-Brahmins is it unnatural if the non-Bramins retaliate and comment upon the origin of the Brahmins on the authorities written by the Brahmins themselves ? I see clear indications that by these wily tricks of the Brahmins the pride of the non-Brahmins is being outraged and there is no wonder if they lead to reprisals. This is not at all desirable. None of the parties I think should be allowed to exceed the bounds of propriety.

Brahmins have begun to hate me because of the Satya Samaj Jalsas (lectures with music). Of course I have nothing to do with them except that I would like their principles and would see that they are widely known. Brahmins call these Jalsas obscene but they preach these obscene things every day by Puranas and Kirtanas and I want to bring to the notice of His Excellency that such obscene things are being taught by Brahmins under the garb of religion and if they are allowed in Kirtanas and Puranas why should they not be mentioned in Jalasa and their obscenity brought to the notice of people. **Of course I admit that I have every sympathy with the Jalsawallas. In the new election they are helping non-Brahmins as Kirtanas (musical sermons of Brahmins) are helping the Brahmins.**

I shall be obliged if you kindly be reading this note letter to His Exellency.

Yours Sincerely,
Sd/- Shahu Chhatrapati

(Kolhapur Archives, Shahu Daftar, Paper No. R- 12314)

(21)

Contest the Council Elections

Sept. 10, 1920

This letter was written by the Maharja Shahu to the watandar Patil Laxman Ramchandra alias Bala Patil of Narsingpur on the background of elections following Monteford reforms. Shahu actively campaigned for local leaders to contest the elections for legislative council and render service to the downtrodden in the British India.

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Chatrapati
Maharaja
Of
Kolhapur
Jai Bhavani

St. Bunglow
Kolhapur
10-9-20

To the Right Hon. Laxmna Ramchandra alias Bala Patil of Narsinghpur, Taluka Walve.

It is the duty of people like you to abandon self -interests for the sake of service to the people. You are a farmer as well as the Watandar Patil . Hence you should contest the election. Since for some years you are a member of the local board and engaged in the service to the community, you are fully competent and capable of contesting the elections to the Council. Thus do not waste the opportunity to be of greater service to the people. With hope of ever growing affection,

Sd/-Shahu Chhatrapati
(in Modi script)

(Vijay Surwade collection)

(22)

Shahu Advises Princess Indumati

Oct. 1, 1920

Shahu's rare latter to his younger daughter-in-law Princess Indumati during his Pune sojourn. The untimely death of his son in an accident in 1918 had brought great grief to Shahu. But he quickly composed himself and treated the widow Princess Indumati like his own daughter. He gave her the benefit of proper upbringing and also ensured her education as a cultured woman with independent personality. This letter shows the softer side of Shahu's paternal affection. Princess Indumati was 14 years old at this time.

Chatrapati
Maharaja
Of
Kolhapur
Jai Bhavani

Kolhapur Lodge
Pune
1-10-20

Dear Princess Indumati,

We have reached Poona after a day and a half at Raybaug. We have business here for 2-4 days. It is possible that Tarabai Saheb Maharaj (Elder daughter-in-law of Shahu) will go to Rookadi to meet her mother-in-law. Ensure that 'Sadu' is sent to Rookadi everyday to keep in touch with your mother-in-law. If she is unwell, then go personally to Rookadi at six in the morning and come back at 9.00.

Do not miss your studies. You are solely in charge at Sontali and Sontali does not have anyone else to look up to. Mama too is not there and Mrs. Senapati Akkashaheb is also not there. You must treat them both as your own in-laws. If they are stern with you, accept it with grace. This I tell you regularly and your obedience makes me very happy.

May god give you the wisdom to stay under my guidance forever. Write of your well being to Mrs. Senapati Akkasaheb and Mama at Shedbal. Do not be naughty while riding a horse or a carriage. Always dine with your entire attendance and other girls. Drink tea only after all of them have done

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so. During meals, enquire about each one of them. Carry yourself in a manner so that all may love you. The sage Kanva had advised his daughter :

"Be of service to your elders,
Love even your husband's other wives
Be humble when your husband is angry,
Be kind with your servants,
Be true to your own duties and
Be not proud when fortune smiles,
Only such is true Mistress of the house,
Others are scourge for the clan....."

Remember this and model your behaviour.

Keep in touch and may our affections grow.

Sd/-
Shahu Chhatrapati
(Modi script)

(Courtesy Shri Shahaji Chhatrapati Museum, Kolhapur)

(23)

Ambedkar to Shahu: non-Brahmin movement

February 3, 1921

This letter written by Dr. Ambedkar from England is self-explainatory. Ambedkar had undertaken to propagate the objectives of the non-Brahmin movement among the English people. Ambedkar also speaks of the future of the movement. The letter also underscores the close relationship between the two great men.

London, 3rd Feb. 1921
10, King Henry's Road,
Chalk Farm,
N. W. 3

My Dear Maharaja Saheb,

Many thanks for your letter of 14th December 1920 and I was very happy to read its encouraging contents.

I have to some extent at least disillusioned Mr. Montagu as regards the position of the moderates in India. It is probable that he will still take his cue from them but I am certain that he will not speak so despisingly of the non - Brahmin movement which in fact none over here ever cared to understand. It is to be regretted that no good exponent of the N. B. movement was present during the critical period when the Reform Bill was on the anvil. Consequently it became quite an easy task for the enemies of the movement to represent it as only anti-Brahminism. Its democratic side was ingeniously suppressed so that a distorted view of the same is what is present in the minds of the most English people. As the Reforms are a fait accompli few people trouble about the number or nature of factions prevailing in India. Yet to be prepared for the future, we must dig from now. I therefore take every opportunity possible to put every important English man I meet into a right frame of mind regarding the inter-relations of social and political problems in India. As my endeavours are after the occasion there can be no immediate effect, but I hope time will show that they are not wasted.

According to Your Highness's directions for starting an Association I consulted some important persons who had appreciated my views and who occupy

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an influential place in English society. They unanimously upheld the idea, but they said that in case there was no paid secretary to the Association it would be a dead body. This of course means an annual expense of at least £ 500 (I cannot say definitely it might be more or less) a year and knowing well the condition of the Depressed Classes I am convinced that immensely beneficial as the Association would be, it cannot materialise owing to the cost being too far above the means of the people.

Your Highness may be glad to learn that Mr. Montagu called me for a second interview and urged me to return to India as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council. It seems that after our 1st meeting he wired to the Viceroy and the Governor of Bombay for nominating (me) to the Council. Of course I told him I did not come to him with a personal grievance but that I was representing a cause. His view was that I should first return and then negotiate with the Viceroy and the Governor of Bombay for the larger representation of the Depressed Classes and that he was prepared to give an under-taking that the matter of representation would not be regarded as closed till I had been heard in the matter. All this of course was very tempting. **But I could not think of leaving my studies half-finished and return for the sake of a place in the Council. I am not wedded to personal glory and although I have given up a chance of doing social service to my people I hope Your Highness will see that this only means that I wish to be better prepared in order that I may do a greater service.**

In the near future I wish to get in touch with the Labour Party and do some plain talking with them. May I suggest that Your Highness might as well see Messrs Wedgewood and Spoor who are touring in India ? In any case I am going to see them when they return and will communicate to Your Highness the upshot of this manoeuvre.

With my very best regards I remain,

Yours Sincerely,

B. R. Ambedkar

P.S. I have made friends with the editor of the London Times and am enclosing herein an article on the education of the Depressed Classes which I caused him to write.

(24)

Mahars make application for abolition of the Mahar Watan

May 27, 1921

By abolishing the Mahar-watans Shahu Maharaj freed the Mahar community from the bondaged slavery. But before taking this step, Shahu wanted the Mahar community to realize their own plight and on their own ask for this practice to be abolished. He tried hard to achieve this. Finally his efforts yielded fruits and the Mahars from many villages came together and approached him with this request in his darbar. It reflects thoughts expressed by Shahu in his speeches elsewhere.

In the service of

Shrimanmaharaj Chhatrapati Saheb Sarkar of Karveer,

Your obedient servants, all the watandar Mahars, from Kanadewadi, Peta Gadhinglij, Karveer

Submit their humble request as under :

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We the Mahar people have been considered as untouchables by deed and creed, wicked traditions and bondages of the Hindu community, ostracized and ordered to stay outside the village, because of which what we have lost cannot be counted. In all other castes and communities knowledge is increasing alongwith social progress. But we have lost everything and have been kept outside the progress. We are on the verge ot loosing the 'human' from within us and have reached the bottom in the state of affairs.

Shrimanmaharaj the Chhatrapati has made many efforts to improve our situation and bring us into the mainstream of society; he has opened the doors of schools for us, created hostels, given jobs and even made some of us into lawyers. He erased the blot of untouchability and treated us like his children. Hence we revere him as our God and for generations we will serve him and his descendants.

But even then when we look at the majority of the people, we feel sad and do not know what to do. So much of reform seems so little.

The Hindus are fond of obtaining *'watans'*. But for us our *watan* and the tasks of our *watan* have no dignity nor do we feel proud of it. But blind adherence to tradition has made this *watan* dear to us like insects in hell. To free us from this very low level of work, the Maharaja issued an ordinance. He decided to give this job to one 'Mahar' for every 10 acres of land. And the rest were free to do whatever they wanted. But this ordinance has not given us any favourable results because the released Mahars will feel that their land has been taken away and they are displaced. Also those few who would be retained would still remain in the same bondage. Hence until we are completely freed from this yolk of *watans*, our community will never improve.And hence the *watan-based* service should be abolished totally is what we pray for.

Hence we write our humble submission as under.

All that land which has come to those of us, by whatever means should be left as it is and no change be made with it. But all the Mahar *'watan'* should be removed from the '9th' schedule of grants to the 5th schedule and all the Mahars freed from their watan duties. All the watan land should be made Raytawa.* Thus the land - holder becomes the owner of the land. Neither the Government nor the watan's responsibility be given to any of us.

This will make us free to do some other work to earn a living. No one loses and hence no one is unhappy. Our earlier *'watan'* meant that we were servants of the entire village where we had to cut firewood, remove dead animal carcasses, and do all the dirty work. As long as these 'tasks' are given to us we will remain as we were. If these bonded duties in our name are abolished, then we shall have freedom to enter other fields, which in turn will remove the stigma of untouchability and lowlyness on us.

Now the question as to who will do the government service as required by the *watan*. The answer is simple. If our lands are made taxable, the Government will get an income. They are free to hire anybody and pay them from this income to get the work done.

*The land for which peasants have to pay tax to government.

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Thus we pray to Your Highness. Please abolish all the Mahar *watan* and make our land taxable as is normal. And 'free' all Mahars from their service obligations.

Thus is our humble submission.

Date : 27-5-1921 AD

Thumb impressions and autographs of Dhondo Pilnak Kamble, Ranoji Nagoji Kamble, Yallappa Chudappa Kamble ,Gangaram Yamaji Kamble

(Gangaram Kamble Collection)

(25)

Abolition of Mahar Watan

June 21, 1921

After receiving the request applications from the Mahars to abolish their watans and incorporate their lands as raytawa in State of Kolhapur, Shahu issued the following order.

Ord.No. 113

To

Raosaheb Huzur Chitnis,

The order is issued as under :-

The Mahars have applied for their *watani* little lands to be converted to *raytawa* lands of their own accord. To free these people, this is the best way and hence for the *watani* lands of the Mahars have been transferred to the *raytawa* schedule. If there are any pending matters regarding these lands or attachments they are all removed. By this order the Mahar's are given full right to these lands as per revenue rules. They are not to render or asked to render any service in exchange. This order may not be kept pending for more than 3 days at any office.

The Mamledar is to report immediately on implementation of these orders. The land shall rest with the one who is in possession, there is no cause or reason that this should not be so.

Sd/-

Rajputwadi Camp **Shahu Chhatrapati**

21-6-1921

(Gangaram Kamble collection)

(26)

Shahu, the social pillar of democracy

september 4, 1921

Another letter from Dr. Ambedkar to Shahu wherein the former seeks some loan from the Maharaja and promises to repay it. Ambedkar also descibes Shahu as a pillar of social democracy movement in India.

C/o. Henry S. King & Co.,
9, Pall Mall
London, S. W.
4th September 1921

My dear Maharajasaheb,

As directed by Mr. Dalvi* I am placing my financial difficulties before you in the hope of getting some relief. But I am sorry to have to approach you but thinking that as you had been pleased to regard me as your friend you would do something to enable me to tide over my difficulties. They have chiefly arisen through the fall in the Indian Exchange in London. When I left India I had calculated the total expenses I would have to incur for my two years' stay in London and according to then prevailing

* Artist Dattoba Dalvi

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rate of exchange I found that I had sufficient funds for my purposes. But as the funds had been invested by a friend with whom I had deposited them I was not able to transfer them to London at the time when I left India. Last year in the month of December when the funds were sent to me I found that owing to the low rate of Exchange the funds realized a sum in London which fell short of the required amount by nearly £150. I have to pay £100 for my Law fees and need about another £100 for my return passage to India. In all therefore I need about £200 to tide over my difficulties. I would be very much obliged if Your Highness can see your way to help me with a loan of that amount. I will repay it with interest when I return. The matter is so urgent and I know so few people that I ventured to sound the matter by first approaching Mr. Dalvi and as Your Highness desired me through him, to write directly, I feel sure that hopes are not misplaced.

I hope Your Highness is enjoying good heath. We need you ever so much for you are the pillar of that great movement towards social democracy which is making its headway in India.

Awaiting the fovour of an early reply
I am yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

(Kolhapur Archives, Shahu Daftar, paper No. R-13420)

(27)

Ambedkar mourns Shahu's death

May 10, 1922

Dr. Ambedkar was in England when Shahu Maharaja died. He sent this condolence telegram to Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaja.

The news of the death of His Highness which I read in the newspapers came to me as a shock. I am doubly grieved by the calamitous event. **In his death I have lost a personal friend and the depressed classes have lost a great benefactor and greatest champion of their cause.** Amidst my grief, I hasten to convey to yourself and the Dowager Ranisaheb my deep and sincere sympathy for this sad bereavement.

Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR
London, 10th May, 1922

(Memoirs of Shahu Chatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur, Vol. II)

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Volume - II

Section - IV

Manifestos, Notifications & Orders

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Editorial Note

Here is a compilation of manifestos, notifications, orders etc. from the regime of Shahu Maharaja, during the period 1894 to 1922. They are taken from "Karveer Sarkar gazette" in the Kolhapur archival records.

The editorial notes at the beginning of each document mention, that various notifications issued by different departments (like revenue, education, legislative etc) in the gazette are based on the sanction of Huzur office .... i.e. with the sanction of Shahu Maharaja himself. Thus even if they are published in the name of chiefs of various departments, they are deemed to be those of Maharaja himself.

Various departments in the State, used to send many resolutions on varied subjects (like transfers, appointments, delegated tasks etc.) to the Huzur Office alongwith their comments. Here, Shahu himself used to scrutinize them and approve or reject the resolutions. Thereafter, the passed resolutions were sent in the form of an order to the relevant department. Then, and only then the concerned department would publish it in the government gazette. Many times Shahu himself ordered the relevant department to present certain resolution to the Huzur Office and these were published in the form of an order in the gazette.

Yearwise registers of original resolutions are available in the Kolhapur Archives. Various coloumns in these register, comprise of serial number, date of receipt, minor department, subject matter, date of final order and the final order. In the final order column, with indication of whether the resolution is approved or not, appears the signature of the Maharaja as "Shahu Chhatrapati".

Presented here, are select extracts from the 'Karveer Sarkar Gazette'. Most of them have a social importance, many of them reflect the sincere desire of Shahu for the welfare of his state. Many do reflect his progressive outlook and his innovative mind regarding social reforms. Common reader of history generally does not turn to such historical resources in the archives. Hence, to acquaint him of such resources and even for the resercher's reference, we are publishing these select extracts with our editorial comments. At the end of each draft, part of the gazette and date of publication are indicated.

●●

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(1)

A manifesto for all subjects issued by Shahu on the occasion of his coronation in 1894. It expresses a sincere desire for the welfare and prosperity of his subjects.

Manifesto

Swasti Sri Rajyabhishek, Sake 220, Vijaynam Samvatsar, Falgun Vadya 11, Induvasare, from Sri Raja Shahu Chhatrapati Swami:

With this manifesto, it is hereby declared to all our subjects that owing to our minor status of age, the 'Council of Administration' was hitherto ruling and governing the State of Kolhapur. Now that We have come of age as of today, the regime of the Council ends and the responsibility of the administration of the state is devolved on us as of today. Accordingly we have started ruling from today i.e. from April 2 of the year eighteen hundred ninety four.

We sincerely wish that our subjects remain contented and happy, their betterment should always be on the rise and our State must always prosper. To fulfil this wish, we hope that all our relatives, Jahagidars, Inamdars, Sardars, dignitaries, traders, workers and all subjects will extend their full co-operation with pure heart and loyalty. I pray to the Almighty with deep faith that let my regime be long-lasting and successful in its endeavours.

Kolhapur New Palace
Date 2 April 1894

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 2/4/1894)

(2)

This order concerns various purchases to be made from common people at the time of Chhatrapati's hunting expeditions or during the official tours of government employees. The order strongly reflectsShahu's wish that common people should not suffer during such purchases. A very similar famous order was passed by Chhatrapati Shivaji to his Chiplun- based military camp.

General Department

Rules regulating purchases of various goods during hunting expeditions of His Excellency Chhatrapati Saheb, or during tour of low and high officials of this state for official purposes.

Experience has confirmed that whenever His Excellency is on tour in a certain area (peta) for the purpose of hunting, the mamledar of the said area orders the foujdar of the area for the required hospitality. Foujdar in turn allocates this job to a police under his powers. The police then procures sheep (for meat) from one place, eggs and chicken from other place in the neighbouring areas. At the time of His Excellency's depature from that particular area, the clerk on duty takes the accounts from concerned officer and pays him the sum for such foodstuffs received. This sum is then passed from him to the foujdar, from him to the police, from police to the village Patil and Patil finally pays it to the person from whom the purchases were made.This is how the payment is expected to be made. However, it is doubtful whether the end person really receives money. To avoid this and in order that the poor subjects should get full value of the goods they sell and in order that no

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subject should suffer owing to the tour of His Excellency following rules are being promulgated for such purchases or supplies -

1) Wheat, jowar, rice, cereals, flour, sugar, spices etc. required for Maharaja's should be brought from *Khasgi* department (King's private department) at Kolhapur as far as possible.

2) To purchase sheep, eggs, or chickens, one labour from the *Khasgi* department should be sent in advance. He should procure the required stuff from th nearby market on the market day from the market place by paying cash. Similar provision applies for purchasing firewood as well. While paying for the purchase if a revenue official is present, payment should be made in his presence and his signature be taken. If no such official is present, payments should be made in the presence of village Patil or Kulkarni with a receipt from the receiver.

3) The police personnel must not be directed to procure such materials in any case. However, should clerk of the *Khasgi* department face any difficulty in procurement, he may take the help of the police personnel only in unavoidable circumstances.

4) Provisions should be made to deploy buffaloes for milk with the retinue. In case this is not possible, valet or clerk of the *Khasgi* department should go to the nearby village, procure milk, pay the owner as per prevalent rates there and there itself. Payment should not be withheld till departure of His Excellency.

5) Fodder : Most of the areas do have government ranches. So, it is mostly unnecessary to buy it from the local villagers. However, should an occasion arise, cash payments for such purchases should be made on the spot to the seller.

6) Whatever things are required by those accompanying the Maharaja, valet from the *Khasgi* department will provide. From this, it is not to be understood that such requirements should be furnished free of cost. The valet must have a note of food grains and other materials from the Darbar and issue these materials by taking due payment.

7) Officials of Karveer State moving for taluka-wise inspections etc. also should purchase their requirements through Patil / Kulkarni amd make payments on the spot. Payments/ credits should not be kept pending till they leave.

8) Bhudargad, Panhala & similar areas adjoining Konkan are nearby mountaineous and poor region. It is difficult to get any material from these areas. Hence provisions should be made in advance to purchase required goods through grocery shop wherever available at the market places, and on the market days, by paying cash.

9) If the Honourable Political Agent, or any other official of the British Government visits the area, the concerned mamledar, shirastedar etc. must ensure to take cash payments for any purchases or procurements they make and pay it to the concerned sellers.

Date: 15 March 1894.

By the order of Council of Administration

M. Kuvarji
Diwan Sarkar, Karveer,

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette Part 1, 14/4/1894)

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(3)

Notification of the Medical Department regarding free provision at the veterinary dispensary for fodder of cattle owned by poor people.

Notification

Medical Department

Dated 14 May 1895

It is hereby conveyed to all the public that the sick cattle owned by poverty-struck people retained at veterinary dispensary opposite Sheribaug in Kolhapur will be provided food and fodder by the government free of cost after ensuring that the owner is totally incapable of providing for the same.

Also, those who wish to sterilize their oxen, stallions, and horses, may bring them to this dispensary for the purpose of free sterilization.

M.Kuvarji
Diwan Sarkar, Karveer

(of Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, date 18/5/ 1895)

(4)

Shahu's order declaring a prize for invention of a safe cane crusher

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Advertisement

General Department

29 May 1895

Many accidents have been repeatedly noticed where the person putting sugarcane to the cane crusher gets his hand injured and fingers crushed. A report was asked about the same from the Darbar Surgeon, which His Excellency has gone through. After his scrutiny (of the report) the following declaration is being published-

If anybody invents or comes up with an idea wherein either the human hand remains safe while working with the crusher or remain unhurt even if accidentally the hand gets stuck into it. Such an idea, if invented before 1st of January 1896, will be suitably rewarded. The concept should be inexpensive. Those finding such an idea should make a model and submit it to the undersigned before the stipulated date.

M. Kuvarji.
Diwan, Nisbat Sarkar Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 1 June 1895)

(5)

When he learnt that a Maratha youth, Bhaskarrao Jadhav had passed M.A. with good grades, Shahu specially invited him and appointed him as the assistant 'Sarsubhe'. The order.

Revenue Department

Date: 8 June 1895

The post of Assistant Sarsubhe is fallen vacant and Mr. Bhaskar Vithoba Jadhav, M.A., has been appointed on the post. His appointment is as per resolution no. 1376, of Huzur Sarkar, on the post of probationary Assistant Sarsubhe on the salary of Rs. 150/- per month from the date of 1st June 1895.

R.K. Vaidya
Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 15 June 1895)

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(6)

Khanderao Bagal, was the first ever law graduate in the Maratha community of Kolhapur State. Following is the charter enabling him to practice law in the Karveer State. Later, Khanderao acquired fame as a reknowed Satyashodhak leader and journalist.

Justice Department

18 January 1898

Since, Mr. Khanderao Gopal Bagal has passed LL.B. examination, Huzur's resolution no. 9, year 1898 grants him the sanad to practice law in all courts of Karveer province.

V. B. Gokhale
(Asst. Chief Justice)

(Karveer Sarkar gazette, Part 1, 29 January 1898.)

(7)

To avoid the spread of plague, Shahu Maharaja had ordered that people should vacate Kolhapur city and stay outside in temporary hutments. Accordingly, most of the city was vacated. However, some traders etc. were still lingering behind. So, here's the second order of Shahu asking each and everyone to vacate the city. This order also states, that the government will provide free hutments built for the poor and labourer class of people.

Notification

General department

2 January, 1900

For the information of all, it is being published that compared to other places in India, loss of lives owing to plague in Kolhapur city three and a half months after its spread is lesser. One of the reasons is vacating the originating place which most of our citizens did in time. From the experience at other places, this seems to be a sure shot measure of preventing the disease. These days, the city has hardly any inhabitants and the extent of the disease is also very low. So, if at this time even the remaining people opt to move out, the epidemic will not spread further. Efforts of those who have already vacated will bear some fruit. Within no time the disease will be eradicated. After the city gets vacated, public works like disinfection etc. can be completed in time and people may return to their original places before the mansoon. This has come to the notice of His Excellency Chhatrapati Saheb, Sarkar Karveer .Hence he has ordered by this notification to vacate the city.

2. Within eight days of publication of this notification, residual inhabitants of the city must vacate it, and move out of the city to dwell there.

3. If shops in the city remain open after this stipulated date, it is likely that interaction of public may bring the disease permanently. Hence, after the above mentioned limit, no trader is allowed to open his shop for trade. A separate place is demarcated near the river as a market place to facilitate procurement of grocery etc. to the public. It will continue as it is for the time being.

4. Those wishing to appoint watchmen etc. for the safety of their house or wish to appoint so in future must register the names with us and get the passes issued. After the said limit, no one will be allowed to stay overnight in the city without such a pass. After the city is thrown wide open the government has appointed extra police

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force for guarding properties of the citizens.

5. Anybody found dwelling in the city limits after the deadline stipulated in clasue (2) above, he/she will he driven out by force and will be chargesheeted for non-compliance with the government rules.

6. A facility has been created, to provide construction material free of cost to the extremely poor people to build their own huts. This material may be availed (with a certificate from Asst. or Extra Asst. Plague Commissioner) from overseer headquarters.

7. Those labourers who have to work as labour daily to earn their bread, may stay at Kalambe tank where the government is constructing hutments for them. The relief work at the Kalambe Tank will also provide for their wages.

8. It is intended to allow people to return to the city as early as possible. Hence, as soon as the city is vacated, disinfection procedure will start.

9. Whosoever requires any sort of information, regarding this notification or regarding disinfection may obtain the same by coming to our office and asking for the same.

R.V. Sabnis
Diwan & Plague Commissioner, Kolhapur

(Karveer State Gazaette, Part 1, 6 Jan. 1900)

(8)

Rules for disinfection of houses and household items

Notification
General Department
22 January, 1900

It is truly satisfying to find most of the people to have left the city, after the notification regarding vacating Kolhapur city was publicized. Now, as the work of disinfection is being undertaken, this notification is being published as per His Excellency's orders.

2. From the date 1st of February 1900, every house owner or the person responsible to that particular house must make provisions for getting the same disinfected as per the government's rules of distinfection and with the supervision of government appointed officials within fifteen days. The houses which will not be distinfected within this limit will be disinfected by the government at expense of the owner as per the rules of land revenue.

3. Those who wish that the government should disinfect their properties, must convey so in writing to the Health Officer, Municipal Committee, City Karveer, and deposit the required amount with him.

4. Chemicals etc. required for such disinfections and cleansing may be bought by individuals wherever they wish to purchase them from. Those wishing to purchase it through the government will get them through the required channel.

5. It is not possible to elaborately discuss all the rules of disinfection of houses etc. in details here. Those requiring such a detailed information may go through the book named "Short Notes on the disease plague" compiled by Mr. George Sinclair, Darbar Surgeon, Kolhapur. However, broad outlines of the sterilization procedure are given below.

(The details are omitted-Editor)

For those, whom the Assistant or Extra Assistant Plague, Commissioner will identify as poor and incapable of spending

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on liquid camphor etc. these chemicals will be provided free of cost.

No one will get a permission and pass to re-occupy and stay in the house unless it is totally ascertained and confirmed that the house is totally disinfected and it is now safe to dwell into. These passes, signed byAssistant Plague Commissioner will be issued for running the trade or occupying the house etc. Those inhabiting without pass will be driven out by force and they will be prosecuted for non- compliance with the government.

R. V. Sabnis
Diwan and Plague Commissioner,
Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 27 Jan. 1900)

(9)

Shahu in 1902 formulated and declared an "Irrigation policy" for his state in order to meet the challenges of chronic drought and famine conditions in many of its areas. Mr. Gupte was appointed as the Irrigation Officer and he was ordered to prepare a report on the status of all the major and minor waterbodies and wells in the principality.

Notification

3 February 1902

Huzur's order no. 104, dtd. 23 January 1902 says about Mr. Shankar Sitaram Gupte being appointed as Irrigation Officer to avoid the draughtlike conditions in Karveer Taluka by starting irrigation works, as follows:

Since it was observed that irrigation works and construction of dams greatly help in resisting famines and droughts, works of large sized water reservoir have been initiated. To put these and the other existent water reservoirs and wells to the maximum benefit of irrigation purposes, irrigation division in the public works department has been separated, and Mr. Shankar Sitaram Gupte has been appointed as its Chief. He has to submit primarily a report on following as early as possible.

Locations of waterbodies worthy of irrigation; where do they get water from? Each quarter how much water do they receive? How much water can be used if a barrier is constructed and water is stored? What kind of biomass will it deposit? Whether it will be beneficial to agriculture or not? Whether water in the existent waterbodies will be useful for irrigation purposes? If yes how many acres will it irrigate and what expense will it incur? Findings to be reported in details. A separate report shall be made on tanks and lakes with above queries.

A talukawise separate chart is to be prepared about how many acres of land gets irrigated by the waters available in the government owned and privately owned wells, lakes and waterbodies in the state. The chart should also contain information about the following - How many bullock - drawn *mot** are operated, for how many days and which kind of crops can the *mot* irrigate, and whether the well is worthy of certain improvements/ modification etc. A similar chart, will have to be prepared for the lakes/water bodies in the state, separately. Irrigation Officer will make the model of such a chart with a copy marked for Huzur's attention.

* The bucket of a bullock-draw well.

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For this division at present a grant of Rs. 600/- for the purposes of surveying equipments etc. is sanctioned. Also the following man -power and salaries are allocated - 1 draftsman, salary Rs. 20/-, 1 Mestri, Salary Rs. 15/- 1 clerk, salary Rs. 12/-. Regarding these points, opinion of Mr. Gupte and Ravsaheb Vichare is solicited is to be forwarded to His Excellency.

The order further indicates that the Talukawise revenue officers have to render all required information and help in this regard to the said Irrigation Officer.

R.V. Sabnis
Diwan, Karveer Sarkar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 8 Feb. 1902)

(10)

The famous manifesto reserving 50 per cent of the government posts for the backward classes in Kolhapur State. This is pioneering move and first such measure taken anywhere in India.

Notification

General Department
Kolhapur, July 26, 1902

Endeavours have been made in recent years in Kolhapur State to foster and encourage education of all classes of the subjects but so far, His Highness regrets to have to record, that those endeavours have not in the case of the backward classes met with the success that was hoped for. His Highness has the matter under very careful consideration and has come to the conclusion that this want of success is due to the fact that the rewards for higher education are not sufficiently widely distributed. To remedy this to a certain extent and to establish within the state incentive to the bacward classes of his Highness' subjects to study upto a higher standard, His Highness has decided that it is desirable to reserve for those classes a larger share of employement in the state service than hitherto been the case.

In pursuance of this policy His Highness is pleased to direct that from the date of this order 50% of the vacancies that may occur shall be filled in by the recruits from among the backward classes. In all the offices in which the proportion of the baclward classes is at present less than 50 %, ther next appoint shall be given to a member of those classes.

A quarterly return of all the appointments made after the issue of this order shall be submitted by all heads of departments.

For the purpose of these orders, the backward classes shall be understood to mean all castes other than Brahmins, Prabhus, Shenvis, Parsees and other advanced castes.

By order of His Highness, the Chhatrapati Maharaja.

K.N.Pandit
Acting Diwan

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I, 26 July 1902)

(Similar notification, dated July 28, 1902, regarding the Khasgi departments of royal house-hold, reserved 50% of the posts for the backward classes in Kolhapur State.)

(12)

Shahu, the conservator of greenery, passes an unusual order

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Civil Department

6 November 1903

There are government owned trees on both sides of roads. People scalp off and break up their branches. Hence, for its bandobast, the resolution No. 461 is passed by His Excellency and accordingly, the order No. 129, dtd. 27th October, 1903 from the office of Diwan saheb has come into force as follows.

- As the people cut the logs, branches etc. of the roadside trees, village labor and Taluka officers are required to be vigilant for the relevant townships and see that the trees are well preserved. This should be informed to all the Patil and Kulkarnis of villages.

R.R. Shirgavkar,
Sar-Subhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 5 December 1903)

(13)

Order clarifying that just like the males, females should be regarded as having attained maturity after completing the age of 18 and should be treated as a 'major' in the terms of law after this age.

From District Registrar

Karveer

In an ongoing case it was required to be ascertained as to at what age should a woman be regarded as a 'major'. Hence information was sought from the *khalsa* province*. Accordingly, Raobahadur Sarsubhe Saheb, Karveer province, informs that in *khalsa* province, as per Act 9 of 1875 of Age of Maturity, clause 3, para 2, a man or a woman is eligible for the purpose of record after attaining the age of 18. Although the concerned order (No. 685) vaguely mentions the subject as 'person'; the word 'person' has to include both men and women, and hence even women like men cannot be said to have attained the age of maturity till the age of 18.

Hence, it is ordered that as the present order No. 33 mentions a 'person' having attained the age of maturity, till the age of 18, for all purposes the word person has to include both men and women, and accordingly a woman is to be regarded (as per this order) to be a 'major' after her age of 18.

3 Sept. 1906

T.M. Marathe
Dist. Registrar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 8 Sept. 1906)

(14)

Raibag, a town on the borders of Kolhapur state, was once famous for the art of cloth weaving. But the Muslim weaver and Lingayat weaver communities had left the village following a communal confrontation. The town had fallen in poor state. The order shows how Shahu rehabilitated the town in a novel way.

Notification

General department

21 September 1908

The township Raibag had a good weaving business which recently has fallen

* The region under the British rule

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in a bad shape. In order that the *Koshti* (weavers) people stay at Raibag and flourish, the following provisions are made.

1. Those weavers who had earlier come here to stay were provided with land and housing. Now they are in need of capital. Hence, the government has kindly decided to offer them an amount of Rs. 3000/- as capital. Out of this sum, Rs. 2000/- are allocated for the Lingayat Koshtis and Rs. 1000/- for the Pendhari Koshtis. This sum is to be provided to them interest free for a period of 5 years. Also, during this period, if at any time the extent of transactions increases, the capital allocation will be increased accordingly.

2. A (co-operative) association of the Lingayat Koshtis is to be formed and it will be named as Sri Shahu Weaver's Association.

3. Detailed rules and regulations about (running of) this organization are formed, and are attached herewith. The organization presently will run as per these rules.

4. The organization to be formed for Pendhari Koshti community is to be named Sri Rajaram Weaver's Association.

5. The rules made for Lingayat Koshti organization are deemed to be applicable to the other Association as well.

6. Since these organizations are a new, they have (presently) been exempted from registration etc. However, whenever they come to a stage when they can afford, the associations will have to be registered.

7. The Mahalkari of Raibag will directly correspond with Huzur Sarkar about these organizations.

8. Presently, for both the associations, Raosaheb Gaikwad, Huzur Chitnis, has been appointed as the president and Gurunathrao Mahalkari will work as the vice-president.

9. The Mahalkari of Raibag this morning was shown the land to be allocated for housing of Lingayat *Koshti*. Provisions should be accordingly made as per normal procedure. For Muslim people, land has been provided in the neighbourhood of the mosque for which also same procedures have to be made.

By the order of Huzur

R.R.Shirgavkar
E.Diwan, Karveer Sarkar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 26 sept.1908)

(15)

A scheme to help poor municipal employees in illness, old age and emergencies

Municipal Department

29 October 1909

As the salaries of the lower cadre workers in Kolhapur municipality, namely the sweepers, Bhangis, gutter-cleaners, manure-makers, vehicle laborers etc are low, they are unable to save, and thus provide for any ailments or old age etc. Hence it is decided to improve the financial status of these people, and (thus) create a provident fund. Accordingly Huzur's resolution No. 409, dtd. 24 September 1909 is passed and the draft of implementation of a provident fund scheme for such laborers was sanctioned. Clause 11 of this said draft, reads thus:

The sum deposited (as the provident fund) will not attract any liability or attachment arising from a loan taken from

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moneylender for any purpose or any liability of the government or municipality.

Thus, the regulation is passed, which for the information of all the public is hereby published.

R.R. Shirgavkar
Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part1, 6 November 1909)

(16)

Free education to depressed classes children

---

16 December 1911

On the order of His Highness, vide resolution No. 662, outward No. 1159, dated 24th November 1911, it is observed that the children of Korvi, Wadars etc. castes, want to go to school at Raibaug, but are unable to do so as they cannot afford to pay the fees, and hence it is orderd that all the children from the depressed classes be given free education in the territory of Kolhapur State.

R.R. Shirgavkar
Divan, Karveer Sarkar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I, 16 December 1911)

(17)

The village Patil is virtually a king in his village, the highest authority of the village, reporting to the government. To educate and uplift the Patil and to ensure his efficiency and effectiveness Shahu started an institute to train the Patils.

Notification

"Delhi Darbar Memorial Patil School"

As a memorial to the Darbar held in Delhi on 12 December a school is to be started in Kolhapur city, vide office order No. 1434, dated 2/2/1912, and approved by His Highness Chhatrapati.

The subjects to be taught in the school are as under :

1] Laws relating to village police, district police, and principles of criminal procedure code.

2] Accounts of village administration, revenue records, land records etc.,

3] Rural health related information,

4] Language studies, for writing reports etc.

5] History of Kolhapur State, geography, administration and governance related information,

Examination will be taken every year by a committee comprising

1] The Educational Inspector,

2] Professor of Science, Rajaram College,

3] Raobahadur Sarsubhe to appoint an officer from administration.

The person who clears this examination will be appointed on the post of patil as per the rules....

Any person who wishes to join this institute may contact the undersigned.

16 April 1912.

A. B. Latthe
Education Inspector,

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part-I, 20 April 1912)

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(18)

Rules regarding Shri Radhabai Akkasaheb Maharaj scholarhip and Shri. Maharani Nandkuwar of Bhavnagar Scholarship for girls.

1. The scholarship will be of Rs.40/- and will be given for a period of one year as per the following rules.

2. The fourth standard girl students of the Marathi schools of Kolhapur city and Bawda-infantry who secure the top two ranks will be given the scholarships in the above two names. For this purpose, the examination of all the schools will be held simultaneously by the educational inspector, and the results and scholarships will be declared.

3. For the schools from areas other than Bawda-infantry and Kolhapur city, based on the results of the annual examination and at the discretion of the Education Inspector, the three most deserving girl students will be awarded scholarships in other names. If suitable candidates for the scholarships are not found then the same scholarships may be given to the next three students in the merit list of the Kolhapur and Bawda-infantry area schools.

4. No girl student will get two scholarships simultaneously.

5. The scholarship candidates must be studying in some school of the State of Kolhapur at the time the scholarships are availed. If there is any lacuna, or irregularity in continuing school education, or for any reason the Education Inspector feels it otherwise, the scholarship will not be given.

6. If the scholarship is denied vide rule 5, the next in line of merit list girl student will be given the residual portion in that year.

7. The scholarship amount will be paid in quarterly installments.

8. Scholarships will be paid from November to October of the following year.

9. Other than these scholarships, another scholarship of Rs. 40 will be given in the name of Shri Sou. Radhabai Akkasaheb Maharaj for best behaviour, to be decided by the Lady Superintendent of Ahilyabai Girls School in consultation with the Educational Inspector.

10. The Lady Superintendent will consult the selected girl as to the form of giving of the scholarship.

3 March 1913

A.B.Latthe
Education Inspector

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 5 April, 1913)

(19)

Shahu used every means to educate the public-processions, fairs, jalsa, carnivals. He started holding agriculture and engineering exhibitions during Mahalakshmi Rathotsav*. The chariot procession of goddess Mahalamxi and Jyotiba fair. The task was entrusted to his brother Bapusaheb and principal of Rajaram College Mr. Darby. Wresling contests and other competitions were also held. That was education with entertainment.

NOTIFICATION

ENGINEERING AND AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITION AT KOLHAPUR

6 SEPTEMBER 1913

On the 15 th of *chaitra shuddha,* the

* The chariot procession of goddess Mahalaxmi.

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Rathotsav of Shri Karveer Nivasini (goddess Mahalakshmi) of Kolhapur and Shri Kedarling (God Jyotiba) procession of Wadi Ratnagiri, are attended by thousands of devotees. Just as the agricultural exhibition was being held earlier during the fair of 'Mayaakka', here too exhibitions etc., should be held so that public is benefited with education along with entertainment. With this purpose in mind, His Highness has issued orders as under, vide No. 69 dated 14th August 1913:

1. All associated tools of farming like ploughs etc, farm animals, horses, buffalos. cows, dogs and sheep etc. are to be exhibited....

2. The President of the organizing committee for the first fair will be Mr. Bapusaheb Ghatge, Sarjerao Vajarat Ma-ab, Chief of Kagal, Senior And Nanasaheb Mulik will act as the Secretary, Mr. Darby, Principal Rajaram College, will organize the second exhibition.

3. Both the exhibitions will start on *chaitra shuddha 14th* and will be held for six days.

4. Entrance tickets will be charged for both exhibitions and the gate collection will be used to meet the expenses of the exhibitions. The government will sanction grant in aid of Rs. 4500 in addition.....

5. Wrestling and Sathmari competitions will also be held.

On order of His Highness,

---

6 September 1913

From the next year on the day following the *Rathotsav* of goddess Ambabai, *chaitra vadya* I, the *'Urus'* of Hazraat Babujimal and on the third day, 'Urus of Dhondpir' will be held, and the agricultural and engineering exhibitions will be held from the 14th *chaitra shuddha*. All schools colleges and offices will be given holidays on these three days.

On order of His Highness,

G.R. Shrikhande, Asst. Diwan
R.R.Shirgavkar Inch. Diwan of Kolhapur

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 13 September 1913)

(20)

Shahu's encouragement to inventors and entrepreneurs.

11 MAY 1915

Applicant Datto Babaji Karajgar resident of Kolhapur has invented a roller-machine for manufacturing *Poha*, and has applied for patent. Considering that he is a local person, the patent is hereby given to him without charging the customary fees for a period of 14 years and if an extension is desired fees waiving shall be reconsidered. Order is issued by His Highness vide resolution No. 587, dated 21st November 1914. No person shall develop or produce a machine similar to the design submitted for this patent, and this notice is issued to inform all.

R. R. SHIRGAOKAR
Asst. Diwan Karveer Sarkar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette,Part1, 15 MAY 1915)

(21)

The notice reveals Shahu's rational mind and how he was completely bereft of royal pompousness and hollow pride. Here, he wisely and mildly admonishes people

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advising them not to be lavish in felicitating his sons.

PUBLIC NOTICE

DATED 26th AUGUST 1915

Crown prince Rajaram, his brother and their companions are returning home from England after completing their education. Like our loyal citizens, His Highness too feels very happy at this event. Different communities, organizations, institutions are organizing functions to celebrate their home coming, demonstrate their loyalty and affection. They have sought contributions to meet the expenses.

Instead of spending these collected funds on lunches, dinners, lighting and firework displays, all of which, give only momentary pleasure, if each of the organizers spend only as much amount as is necessary and suitable to their stature, the balance amount may be utilised for a lasting memorial of the occassion namely to encourage and further the spread of formal education. This idea mooted by some organisations is highly appreciated by His Highness. The palace servants and guards have reserved a major portion of their collection in long-term investment, the interest on which will be utilised to give scholarships and assistance to deserving students of their community. This is an excellent scheme which has given His Highness immense satisfaction. This will not only commemorate the return of the crown prince after acquiring higher education, it will also encourage the future generations of common masses to acquire education. The Huzur has no doubt that if Maratha, Jain, Shimpi, Lingayat, Saraswat, Musalmans etc. communities utilise the funds collected by them for their student hostels and for encouraging the students of their castes, that would be of immense benefit to all. .

Since the times are tough, it is necessary that everyone spends little but spends wisely; and expenses which have no returns are avoided, while those which encourage education be increased.

While soliciting contributions many a leader will pressurize or make compulsory such collections, which is not at all good. The Huzur hopes that no pressure is applied in collecting contributions and that the givers give freely of their own will and pleasure.

If the Maratha, Jain, Shimpi, Lingayat, Saraswat, Musalman, Brahmin and all other communities, utilize the donations they collect for the cause of education, nothing will be better than that. This is the suggestion of the Huzur to the trading and other communities and it is expected that on this auspicious occasion also they will follow this wise course.

The Huzur wishes that even in future whenever such occasions arise, the collections, whether area-wise, community -wise, or village- wise, should be utilized in this befitting manner.

Issued on the orders of His Highness.

R. R. Shirgavkar
Inch. Diwan Karveer Sarkar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part1, 28August 1915.)

(22)

NOTICE

Classes in nursing course are to begin from 1st December 1917 in the Kolhapur

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A.E. Hospital. Those desirous of taking admission for this course should apply in person with a character certificate from reputed persons and a certificate from the headmaster of having passed the Vernacular standard IV examination. A written entrance examination will be conducted, and the first six girl candidates in the merit list will be given scholarships.

A.E.Hospital
Kolhapur

V.S.Tenghse
Darbar Surgeon

Dated 5-11-1917

Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 10 November 1917)

(23)

An important step in curbing the machinations of village Patils and Kulkarnis who harassed the illiterate ryots

Notification

22 January 1918

The local government vide mulki resolution No.533, dated 4 January 1918, on the orders of His Highness issues the following notification:

It is observed that all the Patils and Kuikarnis of the territory of Karveer are engaged in financial transactions within the village under them. This causes hardships to the poor population and hence order is given that all Patils and Kuikarnis are hereby prohibited from conducting private financial transactions within the village of their jurisdiction. All such transactions that have been entered into prior to this order should be completed or settled within one year from this date and after this period no complaint shall be tolerated. This law is also applicable to the near relatives of the Patils or Kuikarnis.

N. P. Bhide,
Ass. Sarsubhe

B. V. Jadhav,
Add. Sarsubhe

B. S. VIRAKTMATH
Chitnis

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part1, 26, January 1918)

(24)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mulki resolution No. 555 dated 24th January 1918 school Board outward No. 8, dated 23 January 1918. On the orders of His Highness-

Education up to primary is free and compulsory in the State of Kolhapur. Swami Parmanand (of Arya Samaj) has started a vernacular school upto IV std. at Kerale. It has been included in the free & Compulsory Primary Education Scheme. Also the English medium school to be opened at the math of Pathgaonkarbuwa under the guidance of Swami Parmanand, is to be covered in the scheme.

Both the schools will be looked after by Rao Bahadur Dongre, and for meeting the expenses of the school a sum of Rs. 3000/- and for the meals of the students a sum of Rs 2000/- , i.e. a total of Rs. 5000/- is to be provided for in the next budget.It is desired that the food and dress of the students should be simple and the standard of education high, so that these boarding schools should create excellent citizens.

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 26 January 1918)

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(25)

PUBLIC NOTICE

24 JANUARY 1918

Vide Mulki Resolution No. 554, school outward No. 7 dated 1918, on orders of His Highness, it is decreed that arrangements for implementation of free and compulsory education act are as follows :-

1. There is a separate department to look after this scheme.

2. This department is to report directly to His Highness and Prof. Raghunath Narayan Apte is appointed as the director of this department. His authority is limited to this department only.

3. Prof. Ramchandra Babaji Panditrao has been appointed as the Education. Inspector and all the authority for this department vests with him. His salary is fixed at Rs. 125/- and Rs. 25/- as allowance.

4. He is entitled to two assistants (salary Rs. 30/- + allowance Rs.15/-). He is to select and appoint them in consultation with Prof. Apte.

5. Establishment required is to be applied for by Professor Panditrao, which will be duly considered.

6. It is hereby ordered that all the officials of the revenue department and their assistants render assistance for the smooth functioning of this department.

7. This order comes into effect from 18th January 1918.

8. Professor Panditrao has been briefed about his duties.

9. Principal Darby is to find a replacement for Professor Panditrao for the college and send the proposal for approval.

10. Office space has been allotted.

This be implemented accordingly.

C.S.Viraktmath Chitnis — B. V. Jadhav Add. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I, 26 January 1918)

(26)

Shahu levies education tax of Re. 1/- per household to finance free and compulsory education scheme.

PUBLIC NOTICE

28 FEBRUARY 1918

Vide Mulki Resolution No. 658, Mulki outward No. 307 dated 23rd February 1918, on the orders of His Highness, it is decreed.

Due to war and various other reasons the overall costs having gone up, the government expenses too have gone up considerably, and hence the budget for education is suffering. But it is essential that the people be educated as early as possible, and hence an additional tax of Re. 1 /- per household be levied for the purpose of education and should be separately accounted for in the treasury.

Rao Saheb Apte is authorised to spend this amount. This will ensure education of all children in the family and for that the sum of Rs. 1/- per annum per household is undoubtedly quite meagre.

Mahadeo Krishnaji Kurne Clerk — B.V.Jadhav Asst. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 2 March 1918)

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(27)

Vested interests of Kulkarnis were an obstacle in Shahu's scheme of introducing the institution of grampanchayat (village self-government) in the state. In a sensational move, Shahu abolished the traditional watans of Kukarnis which drastically reduced their influence in villages. Their inams lands, however, continued to remain with them.

Notification

28 FEBRUARY 1918

Vide Mulki Resolution No. 657, Mulki outward No. 306 dated 23rd February 1918, on orders of His Highness, it is decreed and published as follows.

With the spread of education among the people, time has come to give more rights to the them. In Bikaner and Travancore states, the people have been empowered by introducing Grampanchayats for self-administration. His Highness desires to implement the same in his state. But it appears from the opinion of experts that the watan-holder Kulkarnis are proving to be an obstacle in this work. In an uneducated populace the Kulkarni watan might have been necessary. But now the times have changed. In the present arrangement, a village Grampanchayat will be undoubtedly dominated by Kulkarni who will concentrate power in his own hands and his caste people. This would result into the suffering of the majority of the society i.e. the rayats. The watan-holder Patil is one of the rayats, and he would not be an obstacle to the functioning of the Grampanchayats.

To successfully implement the Grampanchayat scheme the system of Kulkarni Watan must be abolished and hence it is decreed as abolished and a salaried Talathi will be appointed to discharge the functions of the Kulkarni.

Most of Kulkarnis functioning today do not have *Sanad* for lands. They possess these lands not by law but by traditions. The lands remain with them so long as they work as Kulkarni. The Huzur in all kindness desires that (even if the Kulkarni system is abolished) the lands should connue to remain with them and since they have no legal right on lands, such legal ownership of land should be granted to them. Presently, in the absence of the any *sanad*, the Kulkarnis cannot mortgage their lands nor can they sell them. Neither can they award nor can they handover lands to their kins after death or by will. They can enjoy these rights only when they have legal ownership and this will benefit them.

The currently working Kulkarnis are to work till the end of the current Fasli* year and they will get the rights for the year. Those eligible among them will be accommodated as salaried talathis.

Mahadeo Krishnaji Kurne — Clerk

B.V.Jadhav — Add. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 2 March 1918)

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* The harvest - year. This year orginated with the Emperor Shaha Jahan in 1636. It commenses usually with the occurrence of constellation Mrug in June. The rule of converting Fasli into Christion is -Add 590.

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(28)

Abolition of the 'baluta' system was a revolutionary measure of Shahu which gave the 'Balutas' of the village a feedom of livelihood. Their livelihood was restricted for centuries by the traditional professions or duties alone. Now complete freedom to undertake any work or profession was declared.

Notification

28 February 1918

Vide Huzur Sarkar's Mulki Resolution. No.656 of 1918 and consequent order no. 305 of 22 February 1918, it is herewith notified to the people as follows:

With the changing times, most of the rural institutions have become irrelevent today and with survey settlements, even the system of 'baluta'* payment is becoming redundant. At places where the tradition is still followed, the 'baite-baluta' required to be paid is highly more and disproportionate to the work done. Besides the skill of the watandar craftsmen (Balutas) is also declining. Hence it is now decreed that no payment be made to any 'alute-balutas'** including the 'Gramjoshi'. Their services whenever required, can be availed in lieu of cash payment. This notice informs all the people that the members of baluta system including all craftsmen, 'Gramjoshis' and 'Upadhyayas' are free to do any work or adopt any profession and go and live anywhere they want. This order does not affect the Mahars since they are the 'Watandars'.

It is declared that all the Baluta Lands are now made free (rayatawa).

Mahadeo Krishnaji Kurne — B.V.Jadhav
Clerk — Add. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I, 2March, 1918)

(29)

Notification

28 February 1918

The Huzur has already passed the law for compulsory and free education, and published it in the gazette, dtd 29 September 1917 as he is of the opinion that without complete literacy the conditions of the masses will not improve. To achieve this goal, a separate department is created and Raghunath Naryan Apte has been appointed as the Director, Prof. Babacharya Panditrao as the Educational Inspector, and Mr. Sridhar Raghunath Wakankar has been appointed as the Asst. Inspector. Where ever the Educational Inspector, and the Asst.Inspector will go, all the village workers, administrative officers *(Ammaldars)* must help and co-operate with them. If a report is received from them complaining of non-cooperation, it will be dealt in a strict manner. Also, all the correspondence regarding educational matters should be addressed to Mr. Apte or Prof. Panditrao.

B.V. Hawal — R.R. Shirgavkar
Chitnis — Add. Diwan, Karveer Sarkar

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 2 March, 1918)

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* A share of the corn and the garden - produce assigned for the subsistence of the twelve Public servants (Balutas) of a village.

** Aluta-village servant secondary to Balutas

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(30)

Shahu always felt that part of the huge expenses required for free and compulsory primary education of the masses should be shared by the Feudal land holders like Inamdars, Saranjamdars etc, for the welfare of the people especially the rayats. Finally, the following order was decreed.

Civil Department

29 April 1918

Order, bearing outward No. 365, dtd 25th March 1918, passed in accordance with Huzur's resolution No. 722, is as follows -

In most of the places, where free and compulsory primary education has been enforced it will be proper to impose on Inamdars and Saranjamdars of the region a certain tax to obtain part of the expenses required for such enforcement. The Huzur feels sure, that for the benefit and welfare of their local subjects, these people will gladly bear the tax. Hence, those paying 10 to 15% taxes at present, will be charged at the rate of 20 per cent to accomodate the additional educational cess, and that should be collected from next Fasali year 1328, with statements of such collections to be kept ready at the time of Jamabandi (Revenue Collection).

Gopal Gangadhar	B.V.Jadhav
Head Clerk	Asst. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, part 1, 11 May 1918)

(31)

With a view to acquaint the masses with the working of democracy, Shahu had decided and had already promulgated the relevant law to establish Grampanchayats (village local bodies) in his principality. The experiment began in a few selected villages.

Revenue Department

Notification

13 July, 1918

With an intention of establishing Grampanchayats in the villages of Karveer province, the Huzur has decided to start the scheme on experimental basis and as such the following officials should initiate and start the Grampanchayats, in the villages mentioned opposite to their names, and should submit reports to the Huzur every three months.

The Panchyat will undertake and carry out tasks like minor civil and criminal cases, sanitation and roads of the villages, water supply, supervision on schooling and encouraging education etc. Detailed rules and regulations in this regard, will be separately published.

Officer	Village
Rab. Bhaskarrao Jadhav	Unchgaon, Peta Karveer
Rab. Khanderao Gaekwad	Kalambe, Peta Karveer
Rav. Ramchandra R. Sabnis	Chikhli, Peta Karveer
Krishanaji Dhondo Marathe	Rukdi, Peta Hatkanangle

Swami Jagatguru Karveer Peeth has been assigned Bawada, Peta Karveer.

C.V. Virackmath	B.V. Jadhav
Secretory	Asst. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1,13 July 1918)

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(32)

A radical measure of liberating the so-called criminal tribes from registering daily attendance, the pernicious system of hajeri.

Order no. 5

1918

27 July 1918

The 'criminal tribes' are obliged to compulsorily report to village Patils daily. From now on, some of the tribes mentioned below are exempted from *hajeri*.

The forcible daily reporting (hajeri) poses a great inconvenience to these people and they face difficulty in attempts to earn their livelihood with valid means. These difficulties should be overcome. Hence, it is ordered as follows : Reporting for the four tribes Mahar, Mang, Ramoshi and Berad should be discontinued. This doesn't apply to those, who have been sentenced for any of their crimes. This order is to be executed immediately. Thus is the order of Maharaja passed, and accordingly it has to be enforced.

D.D. Sontakke
Dist. Magistrate

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 3 August 1918)

(33)

Shahu deals yet another blow to untuchability. Following two orders give some idea of Shahu's revolutionary zeal in this area.

Revenue department

Notification

10 August 1918

Order based on Huzur's resolution No. 98, outward No. 74, dtd 5th August 1918, states as under -

A separate order is passed, for the appointment of people form untouchable communities, as Talathis. Of them, those who show efficiency must be promoted as clerks-*'Bhaag Karkoon'* and *'Sar-Karkoon'*,*as per Huzur's order.

C.S. Viraktmath Chitnis — N.P. Bhide (for) Asst. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, part 1,17 August 1918)

(34)

Revenue department

Notification

16 August 1918

As per Huzur's resolution No. 119, outwards No. 81 dtd. 8th August 1918, order is passed as thus:

The people from untouchable communities have to be given a preference in the current drive of recruiting Talathis. If any of them are found eligible , they can be appointed on any responsible positions including heads of departments, in revenue, judiciary, police, general administration etc. Hereafter, their (so-called) untouchable status will not be an obstalce in any government employment. The order to be published and gazetted.

B. V. Hawal Chitnis — R.R. Shirgavkar Act. Diwan, Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 24 August 1918)

* Senior posts in clericle cadre

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(35)

For Shahu, the scheme for free and compulsory education was a passion and no obstacle could be an impediment. If there are no buildings for schools, let the temples be used, says Shahu in this order.

Civil Department

23 November 1918

Vide Huzur's administrative resolution No. 829, order 25, dtd. 27 May 1918 to Free Compulsory Education Deptt. and their outward No. 186, dtd. 25 Oct. 1918, it is ordered that:

1) Whichever villages have temples, dharmashalas* and such other suitable buildings, free and compulsory education schools must be immediately started in such premises. Any repairs, thatching etc., if required to be done for such buildings, will be immediately done by the relevant departments.

2) In a village where there is only one suitable temple and which presently is occupied by Chawdi the Patil (village head) should shift this Chawdi to his residence, and start the school in the vacated premise.

3) Where a suitably spacious building is not available to accomodate large number of students in larger villages or townships or one can be hired on rent, the matter should be immediately reported to the Education Inspector of the scheme so that proposal of constructing a building can be expeditiously considered.

4) Where the building available needs repairs, it should be done by the administration from the revenue accruing from temples immediately.

5)Wherever it is not possible to provide a salaried government peon for the school, the Gavkamgar (Patil) will perform the duties like couriering the school's postal correspondance or fetching the teachers' salary etc.

Gopal Gangadhar Chitnis — B.V. Jadhav Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 30 Nov. 1918)

(36)

Civil Department

Appointments

29 January 1919

As per Huzur's administrative resolution No. 408, bearing outward No. dtd. 16 January 1919, the following appointments have been made:

From the untouchable community, Ramchandra Sakharam Kamble, has been appointed as a *daftarband*** in the office of Raosaheb Daftardar*** account branch, on a permanent salary of Rs. 8/-.

Dattu Santram Powar, has been appointed as a *daftarband*, in the office of the Chief Police, on a permanent salary of Rs. 8/-. Dhonddeo Ramchandra Whatkar, has been appointed as a *daftarbandh*, in the forest office on a salary of Rs. 8/- for the time being. Dnyanu Ganu Nikam, *daftarband*, supernumerary, is appointed on a permanent salary of Rs. 8/-. Nikam was

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* A building erected for travelers for free lodging.
** A subordinate officer in charge of office records.
*** Head revenue Officer.

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working in the temporary cadre, who has now been permanent.

These appointments have been effective from 5 January 1919.

C.V. Viraktmath	N.P. Bhide
Chitnis	A. Sursubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 8 February 1919)

(37)

After the 'abolition of Kulkarni Watan the debate between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in Kolhapur state, scaled new heights. Some non-Brahmins adopted the way of Satyagraha, while some resorted to sheer hooliganism. As a result, Shahu foresaw the danger of riots and immediately issued the following order.

Civil Department

Notification

30 April 1919

As per Huzur's (English) resolution No. 3, dtd. 28th April 1919, and an order No. 28, it is to be publicized as under-

After the Huzur returned from Kanpur, he was surprised to hear that some non-Brahmin people have resorted to Satyagraha to prevent the Kulkarnis from returning to work.Some non-Brahmins are resorting to hooliganism. non Brahmins must have felt that once and for all, the burden of Kulkarnis from their backs was off. Some may also feel, that (with this movement) the Brahmins were getting a kind of 'tit for tat' lesson. However, the Huzur totally disapproves of such ways and means. Mamledars should keep a strict watch on such movements, so that the non-cooperative movement against the Kulkarnis does not degenerate into social riots.

Also, the Huzur has heard, that wherever there is a dispute about lands between the rayats and Kulkarnis, the rayats are forcefully practising agriculture on such lands. If that be so— and the Huzur does not think it should be so — Kulkarnis, Joshis etc. must immediately file a complaint with the Enquiry Bench and must also inform the relevant Mamledar and the police about the same.

All Mamledars, Mahalkaris, Enquiry Bench and Police Officers, should make adequate provisions as per this order.

B.V. Jadhav
Asst. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 10 May 1919)

(38)

Balutedars and moneylenders used to rob the peasants by recovering their dues from a standing crop and thereby exploiting them to a great extent. The order declares this method of recovery illegal and a cognizable offense.

Notification

Vide Huzur Sarkar General Resolution No. 32 dated 14 June 1919, it is being declared as follows:

1. Balutedars and moneylenders, whenever they have dues to recover from farmers go to the farm land with standing crops and make the hearing for recovery. The farmers have nobody to consult to

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there and thus they are unjustly robbed of their standing crops in the name of recovery. Henceforth, such recovery shall be considered as oppression and an illegal act. It is declared that the farmer shall not be liable to any decree from Balutedars or moneylenders on his crops till his grains are carried home. Those acting against this order shall be liable for punishment.

2. The traditional twelve Balutedars & twelve Alutedars shall not be paid anything as their traditional right. There is no objection to payment by free will. However, if a government servant, a moneylender or anyone else forces the payment by compulsion, that person will be liable for imprisonment of four days or a fine of Rs. 100/-. This order is applicable to the entire province except the Jahagiris and this has been already published in the gazette of 29 March 1919.

3. Therefore, as per previous orders, every village Patil should make arrangements to make public announcement of points 1 and 2 above through village criers on the day of *Padva* festival and *Akshay Tritiya** occassion every year and a report be sent to the seniors that this has been done. Violation will invite fine of Re. 1/- in each case.

Thus it has been declared for information of concerned and the general public by the order of Huzur.

14 June 1919

T.R.Patil,
Huzur Chitnis

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 21 June 1919)

(39)

Shahu kept a keen eye on the impact of his radical measures. When Mahar watans were confiscated and their lands made free in their names, Mahars started obtaining loans by mortgaging the land which they could not do previously. Prompt came Shahu's order banning loans against such lands temporarily to save Mahars from insolvency.

Notification

Revenue Department

2 July 1919

Since watan lands of Mahars are converted to Raytawa status (general status), nobody should give them a loan, against these lands (as a security) for a period of further 5 years. If anybody extends such loans, it will be treated illegal. This order as above, came into force, as per Huzur's resolution No. 45, dtd. 24 June 1921.

S.G. Swami
Attache

B.V. Jadhav
Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 9 July 1919)

(40)

Advertisement

25 June 1919

It is hereby conveyed to the students of untouchable communities in the Karveer region as under -

Shri Maharaj Sarkar Karveer, by passing an order (resolution No. 621) has taken the following decisions.

* Hindu Festival days : very auspicious.

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1) Ten scholarships of Rs.8 per month for a period of 3 months have been sanctioned for the students of untouchable communities attending Talathi class.

2) These scholarships will be for a period of 3 months. After the first batch of students passes out, the same number of scholarships for the next batch for three months will be awarded.

3) Candidates should submit applications to the undersigned. The applicants should have passed the Mulki examination.

R.R. Sabnis
Superitendent Arya Samaj Gurukul,
Samsthan Karveer.

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, June 12 1919)

(41)

These are three historically important Manifestos of Shahu, abolishing the inhuman tradition of untouchabiity in his State. With these manifestos, he legally prohibited an observance of untouchability in the Revenue , Judicial & General department and public places like schools, hospitals, wells & springs. Shahu has sternly warned his officers that they must resign if they have any objection to these Manifestos.

Notification

Kolhapur 22nd August 1919

No. 5 :- The following Huzur Order received with the Huzur Office No: 79, dated 20th August 1919 is published for the information of the Officers concerned :

"All Officers in the State, Revenue, Judical, or General Department must treat the untouchables, who have entered the State service, with kindness and equality. If any State Officer has any objection to treat the Untouchables according to the above order, he will have to give notice of resignation within six weeks from the receipt of this order and resign his post. He will be entitled to no pension. His Highness expects every subject of his should be treated like a human being and not like a beast. His Highness wishes and hopes that they will follow in the foot-steps of the Missionaries, Arya Samajists, the Railway Authorities and the Government Officials."

By order of H. H. the Chhatrapati Maharaja Saheb,

K. GAIKWAD,
Personal Assistant to the Diwan.

Notification

Kolhapur 22 August 1919.

No. 6:- The following Huzur Order, received with the Huzur Office No. 80, dated 20th August 1919 is published for the information of the Officers and persons concerned :

It has come to the notice of the Huzur that even in our Educational Bodies the Touchables and the Untouchables are treated differently and are not allowed to approach the school presincts within the compound of the Educational Institutions. The State quarters of the Educational Bodies are not given to them as their private property and so they have no right whatever to treat the so-called untouchable human beings so defiantly, but they are expected to give them every consideration. Institutions like Educational Bodies are meant for poor people and even the poorest

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untouchable human being has right to be treated on a footing of equality. They pay the taxes, why then should they be ill-treated ? The Huzur earnestly hopes that the Educational Private and State bodies, who receive Grant-in-aid or other help like buildings, play grounds etc. should treat Untouchables with great respect and kindness than Touchables, because Touchables can make their way in education any how while Untouchables are hopelessly helpless.

Most certainly every one from the Principal to the lowest Master will be taken to task and any help given to private bodies will be taken back if the Untouchables are not given equal treatment.

His Highness earnestly desires that follow the good example set in by the American Mission at Miraj and the good examples set in by the St. Xavier and Wilson Colleges and the Mission Schools in Bangalore, Panchgani and Arya Samaj Schools, Colleges and Gurukuls, and also by the Railway Authorities, where no difference is made between Touchable and Untouchables. Any Untouchable student joining any State-aided or helped Educational Institution should be treated respectfully like a gentleman and taken into school rooms. If any man on the state Educational Staff has any objection to his doing so, he must send his resignation within six weeks from the receipt of this order. He will of course be entitled to no pension. If the helped or aided Educational Bodies have any objection, of course the Darbar will have to stop the grant-in-aid or help which they are receiving. Play-grounds, houses, and other moveable and immovable property, which have been given to them by the State will be heavily taxed.... Any school-master, however overworked he may be, is expected to help the untouchable students when they come to school.

Rao Bahadur Dongre will furnish all the teachers, whether of the State or Aided Schools with a copy of this order-

By *order of* H. H. the Chhatrapati *Maharaja Saheb,*

K. GAIKWAD,
Personal Assistant to the Diwan.

Notification

Kolhapur 22nd August 1919.

The following Huzur Order, received with the Huzur Office No. 81, dated 20th August 1919, is published for the information of the Officers concerned and of the public :

"It has come to the notice of His Highness that even in our charitable Hospitals, the touchables and untouchables are treated differently and are not allowed to approach the Residential State Quarters within the compound. These quarters are not given to them as their sanitaries and so they have no right whatever to treat an untouchable human being so defiantly, but they are expected to give him every due consideration. Charitable Institutions are meant for poor people and even the poorest untouchable human being has a right to be treated on a footing of equality. His Highness earnestly hopes that his Medical Staff will follow the good example set in by foreigners, especially by the American Mission at Miraj. Any patient, whether touchable or untouchable, where he goes to the Residential Quarters should be treated respectfully like a gentleman, taken into the house, is examined carefully and then sent to the Hospital for treatment and not turned out like an animal or beast. If any man on the Medical Staff has any

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objection, to his doing so, he must send in his resignation within six weeks from the receipt of this order. He will, of course, be entitled to no pension. Any Officer, however, hard worked he may be, is expected to attend to the sufferings of a poor patient first. This rule is applicable to the whole Medical Staff from the Highest Official down to the lowest menial such as a dresser or a nurse. Every servant of the Hospital now in service or employed hereafter should be furnished with a copy of this order and also a copy of this should be hung up in the Office of the Hospital for permanent guidance."

By order of H. H. the Chhatrapati Maharaja Saheb,

K. GAIKWAD,
Personal Assistant to the Diwan.

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, vol. iv, 23 August 1919)

(42)

Ordinance No. 3

26 August 1919

Hereafter, no one in the Karveer State will sell cows to the butchers. If such act comes to notice, the offending person will be heavily fined. This is conveyed as per Huzur's order dtd. 24th August 1919. Accordingly, it is conveyed to all concerned officers, that the same declaration should be publicised in the areas under their supervision through public criers.

D.H. Gokhale
Incharge Distric Magistrate

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, vol. 1; 30 August 1919)

(43)

Shahu's leanings towards Arya Samaj and its ideology become clear in this order. It is emphasized here that atmost preference should be given to the untouchable candidates.

Notification

1 . Talathi and Patil training classes will now be held every year in Gurukul under the supervision of Pandit Atmaram Shashtri like the 'Mulki' examinations. The book *Satyarth-Prakash* will be taught in these classes.

2. Mr. Balasaheb Gaikwad should provide the teachers required for these classes and with assumption that their salaries have a special sanction, should permanently add a provision for the same in the next budget. This sum must be sent to Pandit Atmaram Shahtri.

3. The fees for examinations of Patil and Talathi class should be half that of the Mulki examination and that amount should be credited to the Huzur treasury by Pandit Atmaram Shastri.

4. Pandit Atmaram Shastri will have to send the result of Talathi examination to Mamledars and Mahalkaris and accordingly they can select a good person based on the result.

5. It is heard that owing to large number of candidates, a few were left out from sitting for the examination. In this case, a re-examination should be conducted for the candidates who were omitted.

'Talathi' and his selection has been exclusively the authority of the Mamledar. If he feels that a certain Talathi is incompetent, he may dismiss him and appoint a new one. Also, the Mamledars are authorized to give salaries, impose

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fines, sanction leaves etc.

Preferably, a Talathi for an area should belong to the caste which is predominent in that particular region. Preference must be given to the people like Mahar, Mang, Chambhar etc. from the untouchable communities. Each Peta must have minimum of five and each Mahal have minimum of three untouchable Talathis....

Shahu Chhatrapati

(Karveer Sarkar gazette, Part I, 30 August 1919)

(44)

Notification

As per Huzur's resolution No. 354, outward No. 264, dtd. 8th October 1919, it is hereby conveyed for information of all the people, as under:

Sriman Sakal Saubhaguasampanna Vajrachudemandit Matoshri Laxmibai, Maharani Saheb, in her kindness has ordered that since there are no restrictions of *parda* (veil) among backward communities, those women of these communities who intend to pursue education should submit their applications to Appasaheb Mamasaheb Surve so that he can make arrangements for their lodging and boarding.

Gopal Gangadhar Chitnis — K. Gaikwad Act. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette part 1,16 October 1919)

(45)

Another historic move by Shahu to annihilate untouchability and make the upper castes understand its meaning.

Notification

School Department

8 October 1919

As per order based on Huzur's resolution No. 340, outward No. 247, dtd. 30th Sept. 1919, it is hereby conveyed to all people, as under:

From the forthcoming Dassera (festival) all separate schools being run for untouchable communities' children in Kolhapur State (except Jahagirs) are being closed. Then onwards, these children shall be routinely admitted in the government schools like other children in a normal fashion. Since government schools do not observe touch taboo, children from all castes and religions must be made to sit together.

Gopal Gangadhar Chitnis — K. Gaikwad Act.Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I,11 October 1919)

(46)

Another of Shahu's manifesto banning observance of touch taboo or any other manifestation of discrimination or apartheid of the so-called untouchables at all public places.

Civil Administration

Notification

8 October 1919

Order is passed as per Huzur's administrative resolution No. 353, outward No. 255, dtd. 6th Sept. 1919, as follows -

"No untouchability will be observed

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with any human being at all public buildings, sanitoriums, state houses, government free lunch-homes, or water-holes at rivers, or public wells etc. Uniform equality is observed in Christian public buildings, public wells; also Dr. Vaile and Dr. Wanless at the American Mission treating all human beings with equal compassion . Similar conduct is to be observed (in the state) by all. In case this is not implemented, the Gavkamgar Patils, Talathis etc. will be held responsible." Provisions are to be made accordingly.

Gopal Gangadhar
Secretory

K. Gaikwad
Act. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, October 18, 1919)

(47)

Grand exhibition of Animals at Kolhapur

1 to 5 April 1920

Place : Khasbaug Maidan

Fodder for the animals will be supplied free of cost.

Maharaj Chhatrapati Saheb Sarkar Karveer has decided to arrange an exhibition of horses and other various kinds of livestock from April 1st, 1920 to promote modern knowledge of agriculture in these modern times, disseminate information of breeding techniques and nurturing of cattle and generally to entertain the people. Following animals, alongwith native and imported breeds of cocks and hens will be displayed in the exhibition.

1. Animals: Horses, cows, buffaloes, male buffaloes, and fighting goats.

2. Bullocks for bullock-carts and powerful oxen.

Earlier, an exhibition for agriculture and livestock was held in 1914-15. Likewise, this year, only a livestock exhibition will be held on a grand scale. Animals will be given prizes as follows - (Here details are given - Editor).

Note : Unfit and lame animals will not be entertained for the purpose of exposition.

Applications (for participation) should be received 8 days in advance. Animals to be displayed in the exhibition must be sent one day in advance to us so that they can be accommodated in a suitable place. Also printed application forms for animals to be displayed are either available at this office or at the relevant Petas and Mahals.

Office address : Kolhapur Khasbaug Exhibition office.

7/3/1920

B.V. Jadhav
Secretary
Exhibition Committee, Kolhapur

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1,13 March 1920)

(48)

It is well known that Shahu made special attempts to end the monopoly of privileged classes in law and judiciary by promoting talented educated men from all backward castes to enter the field. He granted many from the untouchables and backward class the charters to practise and made them the chartered lawyers. Following is one of his orders. Many such orders of Shahu are found in gazettes.

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Judicial department

11 March 1920

Mentioned below are the people to whom charters (Sanads) to practice law at the Karveer court have been given.

1. Ramchandra Shivram Kamble, Judicial Resolution No. 55 dtd 22/1/1920
2. Ramchandra Sakharam Kamble, J. Resln. No 54, dtd 22/2/1920
3. Dattatraya Santram Powar, J. Resln. No. 56, dtd. 22/2/1920
4. Tukaram Appaji Ganeshcharya, J. Resln. No. 57, dtd. 22/2/1920
5. Krishnarao Bhausaheb Shinde, Resln. No. 58, dtd. 22/2/1920
6. Vishwanath Narayan Kumbhar, Resln. No. 59, dtd. 22/2/1920

Thus six men are given charters to whom the fees for two years is waived and as per the Huzur's orders, they must appearand pass the law examination within one and half years of receiving the charter.

V.B. Gokhale
Chief Justice

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 20 March 1920)

(49)

Civil Department

31 July 1920

From Sarsubhe, Karveer Ilakha -

Vide the Huzur's resolution No. 1 and the Huzur's order outward No. 5, dtd. 26 June 1920, it is to be publicised as under:

The rules, regarding the appointments of Mahars at Kasba Karveer, have already been published. Accordingly following order is passed so that their social status in the society may improve.

1) It was earlier decided that 16 people chosen by Mahars of Kasba Karveer would perform duties related to the village. This is now cancelled and it is freshly ordered that these 16 people will be appointed at Karveer city police gate and they will work as police. The Police Department will send Rs. 112/- per month to Karveer peta and Mamledar will get the village duties performed with this amount and keep the accounts. This order will come in force from 1 July 1920.

2) Those Mahars who are obliged to stay for their service in villages more than 12 miles away from their native village for more than eight months, they may be given the allowance at the rate of Rs. 2 Annas 8 per month.

3) After they serve for 8 months away from their home, they will be given a leave of 4 months from the job in their village. To give an allowance for this period will be decided by the Huzur.

If any Mahar, with his efficiency, reaches the ranks of Naik Hawaldar or Jamadar, except his salary amount of Rs. 7/- the enhanced amount will be paid by the police department.

These are Huzur's orders. Accordingly provisions should be made.

N.P. Bhide
Asst.Sarsubhe

B.V. Jadhav
Sarsubhe

N.G. Sardesai
Chitnis

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 7 August 1920)

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(50)

Shahu declares public holiday on the Nirvan day of Tirthankar Pushpadant Swami; but takes practical approach to demand of the Jain commnity that no animal slaughter be permitted on the day.

Notification

15 September 1920

Bhadrapada, Shuddha 8 is the day of heavenly abode (Nirvan) of Jain Tirthankar Pushpadant Swami and is a day of festival for the Jain community. Hence this day will be treated as a gazetted holiday each year and schools, colleges, offices etc. will remain closed.

Other demand of the Jain community in this regard was that animal slaughter should not be permitted on this day. However, all subjects being equal, no law can be passed which will deprive anyone of his food. However, if Jains make attempts and turn the public sympathy and opinion in their favour so that the subjects of other castes and religions respect the Jain community's appeal to control animal slaughter as far as possible, the Huzur will be delighted;

B.V. Hawal Chitnis — D.D. Sontakke
Act. Diwan, Sarkar Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1,18 September 1920)

(51)

Shahu had changed surnames of many people from untouchable community in order to improve their social status. Here he sanctions a 'Bhangi' the untouchable sweeper to change his name to 'Pandat' meaning a learned Brahmin !

Civil Department

1 February 1921

Karveer Municipal Committee was constituted by the elected representatives. Suvhan Bala Bhangi is an elected member of this Committee and accordingly it has been published in the gazette. Since this member has requested the Huzur for a permission that he may prefix the surname 'Pandat' instead of Bhangi, Huzur's resolution No. 489, inward No. 1024, sanctions him to do so. Hence, one and all should henceforth call and address him as 'Suvhan Bala Pandat'.

K. Gaikwad
Act. Diwan, Sarkar Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 5 February 1921)

(52)

Shahu Maharaja enacted some new, progressive laws for his state, while some he drafted by adapting the British laws. Codification of all these laws was published under the name, "Hindu Kaydyache Nibandh".* and their implementation ordered.

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14 May 1921

*"Hindu Kaydyache Nibandh"** published on 22 October 1921, with the consent of the Huzur, should be regarded applicable for the entire Karveer Ilakha except the feudatories. This is as per the Huzur resolution No. 182, inward No. 317 of 5 May 1921.

B.V.Haval Chitnis — U. Abdullah
Act. Diwan, Sarkar Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part 1, 21 May 1921)

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* The essays on Hindu Laws.

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(53)

This is Shahu's one of the magnificent moves that completely annihilated untouchability and restored the status of untuchables as human beings equal to all. This order is typical of many orders he passed with this objective in mind.

Civil Department

Notification

27 July 1921

Vide Huzur's Adm. Resolution No. 168, on 15 July 1921, with outward No. 148, dtd. 18 July 1921, following order is passed:

Those Mahars, who have submitted their Watan (lands) in the Raytawa (status) have to be exempted from *Vetvarla*. Taral Ghast*** community people also should not be forced to do such *Vetvarala.* Anyone extracting such services from these people by muscle power will be relieved from the (government) job without benefit of pensions and if he happens to be a Watandar, his Watan will be confiscated forthwith. The Huzur has ordered that this is to be conveyed to all the Gavkamgars and accordingly provisions should be made.

S.G. Swami
Attache

A.J. Mohite
I/C. Sarsubhe

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I, 6 August 1921)

(54)

Here is Shahu's another move indicating to enhouse the social prestige of the Untouchable people. This is probably the last order of Shahu regarding the welfare of the so-called untouchables.

Notification no. 41

25 November 1921

When the school department was under the Civil Department, Raobahadur Sarsubhe had submitted his annual report on compulsory primary schools. In this report, the word 'untouchable' (*asprushya*) was used for the children of untouchable community. Having seen the report, the Huzur orders that henceforth instead of the word 'untouchable' for that community, another word 'Suryavanshi' related to the race that descended from the sun shall be used to address them. This is as per Huzur's resolution No. 28, inward No. 47 dtd 15 November 1921. Accordingly provisions should be made.

I pledge, that this remark is correct.

B.V.Haval
Secretory

U. Abdullah
I/C. Diwan, Sarkar Karveer

(Karveer Sarkar Gazette, Part I, dtd. 3rd December 1921)

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* Vetvarla = extracting services without remuneration.
** Taral Ghast = Persons from the Mahar community doing petrolling job in a village.

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GLOSSARY

Aare : Ara - A small unit of land.

Abhang : A particular metrical composition in praise of the deity, usually in the Prakrit language; a hymn.

Abru : Honour, reputation, respectability.

Addapalkhi : A kind of special honour bestowed upon a particular Lingayat Swami.

Akhada : Arena

Alutas-balutas : **Aluta** : A common term for certain village officers secondary to the Baluta.
Baluta : A public servant of village who receives a share of the corn and garden-produce assigned for their subsistence.

Ambilkanya : **Ambil** : A dilute preparation of Nachana-flour soured and buttermilk etc.
Kanya : Broken kernels of rice also particles of rice or other grain boiled.

Apat-Dharma : A succedaneous rite or work permitted to one disabled by adverse circumstances from performing the rite or work prescribed.

Ashram : A hermitage, an abode of saint or sage.

Avlia : A holy personage; a sage or saint; one absorbed in contemplation or in austere devotion.

Bahishkrit : 1) Expelled from caste, 2) Put out or excluded.

Bana : A weapon. A sort of patta with a thick-edged blade and a wooden hilt.

Banjara : A caste or class, or an individual of it. They were carriers of grain, salt etc.

Bhajan : 1) Adortion or worship
2) A hymn, or a piece or a verse to be sung to a God.

Bhakar(Bhakari) : Bread, sanction of wheaten meal or flour, but commonly of meal of bazri or jowar.

Bhatji : A term used for a Brahman in general, or for a Vaidik in particular.

Bigari : A porter or laboring man in general.

Chabukaswar : A horse-breaker; a jockey; a rough rider.

Chatni-Bhakar : **Chatni :** A seasoning formed of chopped chilies etc.
Bhakar : Bread, or a cake of bread, sometimes of wheaten meal or flour, but commonly of meal of bazri or jowar.

Chhapparband : A thacher, or a maker of thatched frame. A nomdic tribe in India

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Cinemakesari : It literally means Lion of Cenema. The title honouring an artist as an idol in the field of movies.

Chitpawan (Kokanstha Brahmins) : A sub-caste of Brahmins or an individual of it.

Cholkhana : A web of cloth to make a choli.

Choli : A sort of sleeved breastcoat of women.

Dafedar : It is a title of superior officer in the peon department.

Dalit : Downtrodden.

Dandpatta : Exercise or practice with a fencing stick in one hand and the weapon called Patta in the other.

Dargah : A Muhammadan place of worship.

Dashpind : The oblations collectively to the manes of a deceased ancestor, which are offered daily from the first day of his decease until the tenth, or which are offered together on the tenth; also the rite.

Deshastha : Sub-caste of Brahmins or an individual of it.

Devdasi : A temple dancer and courtsan attached to a temple.

Dharamshala : A building erected for the accommodation of travelers.

Dhoti : A garment of males worn around the waist, passing under and tucked in behind.

Dindi : A procession of an idol.

Diwan : 1) A prime minister.
2) The officer in charge of the revenue administration of a district.

Farigadga : An implement of gymnasium. A kind of manly sport.

Fesati : A bundle or mass of loppings from thorny bushes.

Gadekari : The spear-bearer before an elephant.

Ganeshotsav : Festival of lord Ganesh - a deity with elephant head.

Gangotri : The spot on which the Ganges descends (from the heaven).

Ganmaharshi : Literally means a sage of the art of singing.

Garbhdan : One of the essential and purificatory rites amongst Hindus. Sacrifice on or before conception.

Gattechor : A criminal tribe.

Gazal : A lyric poem or ode.

Gharana : A school of music.

Gumasta : An agent or deputy.

Gurukul : A centre of learning where a Guru imparts knowledge to his disciples.

Hajeri : Compulsory attendance for a member of criminal caste or tribe.

Haldi-Kumkum : 1) The ceremony of presenting to husband-living ladies, in the month of Chaitra or upon the occasion of Navratra.

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2) Turmeric powder and the colored powder prepared from it called Kunku.

Hindkesari : Lion of India : The highest honour in field of wrestling.

Hindupadpatshaha : The Emperor of the Hindus. The Chhatrapati (The Maratha King) was addressed as Hindupadpatshaha.

Inam : A grant in perpetuity without conditions.

Inamdar : A holder of an Inam

Jagatguru : A title of the Supreme Being as the teacher or Enlightener of his creatures.
-Applied also to any eminent guru.

Jahagirdar : A holder of a Jahagir.

Jalsa : A folk concert.

Jambiya : A kind of daggar.

Jarath kumari vivah : **Jarath :** Old, very aged and infirm.
Kumari : An unmarried girl. A teenage girl.
Vivah : Matrimony or wedlock. An act of marrying of aged man with a teenage girl.

Jat-Inam : A kind of Inam granted to a person for his lifetime only.

Jat Panchayat : **Panchayat :** An assembly or arbitrators (usually five) of a tribe or caste (Jat).

Jogtin : A female beggar of the alms called Jogava; A devotee of goddess Renuka or Yallama.

Johar Mai-Baap : **Johaar** : The words used for salutation by low caste people, in saluting their betters.

Kalamaharshi : A sage in the field of art.

Kalapur : The city of Arts.

Kalatapsvi : An artist who has devoted his life to art like an ascetic.

Kalgiwale : A singer of the Lavani termed Kalagi.

Kaliyug : The fourth age of the world, the iron age or that of vice.

Kalpataru : 1) A fabulous tree of Indra's heaven.
2) A tree which yields whatever may be desired.

Kamdar : An officer or a public servant.

Karmveer : One who observes the principle : work is worship. A man of actions & deeds.

Kasba : The chief town of a mahal or pargana.

Khadkhada :

Kirtan : Celebrating the praises of a god with music & singing.

Kirtankar : One who performs the kirtan.

Kokilkanthi : One who sings like a Cuckoo.

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Kshatriyakulawantas : **Kulwantas :** The ornament of Kshatriyas. A title adopted by Shivaji the Great at the time of his coronation.

Kumkum : 1) A powder prepared from turmeric colored with lemon juice, alum & etc.
2) It is rubbed by married women on the forehead & etc.

Kunbi : An individual of the agricultural order, a cultivator or peasant.

Kurmi : A caste belonging to peasantry.

Lavani : A ballad or song of a particular kind; esp. sung by women.

Lokraja : A people's King.

Lonari : A caste or an individhal of it. They are hewers of wood, makers of charcoal, and lime-burners.

Madhukari : One that subsists on victuals obtained by begging from door to door.

Mahaavastra : Fine clothes, splendid apparel : also a single article of such, shawl & etc.

Mahalakari : A revenue and police officer in charge of a Mahal.

Maharki : A cess on the inams of Mahars.

Maharashtra Kokil : **Kokil :** Black or Indian cuckoo. An honorific title for the singer of Maharashtra.

Maher : The maternal mansion of a married girl, the house of her parents.

Mamledar : The officer holding the government post and collecting the revenue of a Taluka.

Mangalashtak : Stanzas or lines recited at marriages, munj & in blessing the rite or its subject.

Mardani Khel : Manly sports.

Math : An anchorite's or devotee's dwelling place.

Morchal : A brush of peacock's feathers. It is waved over idols, Rajas & c.

Motizara : Disease of throat.

Mrigaya : Hunting.

Murali : A female dedicated to the god Khandoba.

Namdar : Honourable, celebrated.

Navratri : A space of nine days and nights, and particularly that included between the first and the ninth days of the moon of Chaitra; and a similar period in the month of Ashwin: also the festival at this season.

Nirvana : Death.

Nokarshahi : Bureaucracy.

Padmabhushan : One of the highest national awards bestowed by the President of India.

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Panchsheel : Five principles of peace.
Pandavpanchami : One of the festivals in Maharashtra during the Diwali period.
Pangtiprapanch : Partiality in serving guests.
Panja : The iron hand of Muhammadans, representing their five holy personages.
Pant Amatya : Revenue minister in the council of ministers of the Marathas.
Patil : The head managing officer of a village.
Peeth : In the sense of seat or spot of eminent residence or abiding.
Pendhari : A marauder of a (formarly) well-known description, a Pindarie.
Peshwai : Regime of Peshwas. The Peshwa was the Prime Minister of the Maratha State. Later on he became a de facto ruler.
Petha : A manufacturing or trading town, also a market town.
Pir : Muhammadan saint at whose shrine vows are made and offerings presented.
Pitamaha : A paternal grand-father.
Pithala : A sauce, - flour of gram boiled and spiced.
Prabhu (Kayasth) : A caste or an individual of it.
Puranic : 1) A Brahmin well-read in the Puranas.
2) A public expounder of them.
Puran Poli : A wheaten roti cake with stuffing of coarse sugar, split pease etc.
Purdha : Veil-used to maintain privacy of ladies of high castes.
Purush sookt : A part of Rig-veda, composed by sage Narayana.

Ramnavami : The birth day of Lord Rama.
Ram Ram : The form of salutation or greeting among the common classes of Hindus.
Rathotsav : A festival in which idols are placed in the chariots and paraded about.
Rayat : A subject (as of a king); a tenant (as of a landholder & c.); a Ryot.
Rayatwa : 1) Land-tax upon the peasantry.
2) subjects or tenants collectively.
3) The condition, business, or duties, of a subject or tenant.
Rayatwari : By, to, of, with the Ryots severally.

Saathmari : The sport of beating about, from one tormenter to another, in an arena, of elephants or an elephant with sticks.
Saki : A particular measure of poetical composition.
Samadhi : The little edifice to contain the Tulsi plant which it erected over the burial place of a Sanyasi.
Sanad : 1) A commission or warrant.

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2) A sealed paper of authority, commanding, authorizing, appointing & etc.

Sangeet Samrat : It literary means an Emperor of Music. A maestro.

Sangeet Surya : It literary means the Sun of music. A maestro.

Sanskara : A common term for the essential & purificatory rites or ceremonies amongst the Hindus.

Saranjamdar : Holder of Saranjam

Saranjam : Lands or villages or region granted in inam to a person from whom military services are required.

Sarsubhe : A public officer. He stands between the mamlatdars and Government.

Sarswat Brahmin : A sub-caste of Brahmins or an individual of it.

Shahiri : Relating to a Shahir (Minstrel) or poet.

Shahirshardul : Shahir- a poet. A applied commonly to one who gains a livelihood by reciting ballads and songs. Shardul means a tiger.

Shankaracharya : 1) The designated or the celebrated teacher of the Vedant philosophy. He is stated to be an incarnation of Shiva.
2) Applied also to the Sanyasis presiding over the several Mathas or colleges established by him.

Shenawi : An articulate caste of Hindus.

Sher : A measure of weight.

Shetsara : Land-tax.

Shishya : A pupil, a disciple.

Shivjayanti : The anniversary festival of Shivaji the Great.

Shraddh : It is specially performed for a parent recently deceased, or for three parental ancestors, or for all ancestors collectively.

Shrawani : 1) The ceremony of renewing the sacred thread, performed in this (Shrawan) month.
2) The day of full moon of the month Shrawan.

Shreevatsa : 1) A name of god Vishnu.
2) The mark (a cross-form curl of hair) on the breast of god Vishnu(made by the foot of a Brahmin).

Shruti : The Vedas severally or collectively.

Smriti : Law, - the body of laws as delivered originally by Manu and other legislators to their respective pupils, and committed by them from recollection to writing: also any book, canon, or portion of this body or code.

Surshri : An honorific title in the field of Music.

Takkya : Public meeting place of Mahars.

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Talathi : The stipendiary accountant and registrar of a village.

Tamasha : A folk concert.

Tapasvi : One engaged wholly in the exercises of devotion and mortification, an austere devotee, an ascetic.

Thug : A knave, rogue.

Thumri : A veriety of song- a species of amorous composition.

Vaghya Murali : **Vaghya :** A class or an individual of it. They are males dedicated at birth to God Khandoba.
Murali : A female dedicated to Khandoba.

Varhadi : Guest in marriage.

Varnashram : The four Varna (grand division of the Hindu body) and the four Ashram (orders or stages of the Brahman).

Vastushanti : Ceremonies towards the composing of evil spirits observed on entering into a house that is just built.

Veeta : A sort of spear used formerly in the field and in the exercises of the area.

Vijayadashmi : The tenth day of the light half of Ashwin, the day of the Dasra & c. An auspicious day in the Hindu Calendar.

Watandar : A holder of watan.

(Note: Most of the meanings of the words are derived from "Molesworth's Marathi-English Dictionary")

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